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THE RENAISSANCE IN CENTRAL ITALY

XXII

(Frontispiece)

RAPHAEL

1483 – 1520

UMBRIAN SCHOOL

"THE MADONNA OF THE TOWER"

(NATIONAL GALLERY)

The Virgin is seated behind a parapet; she is holding the Infant Christ with her right arm. In the distance is seen a tower, from which the picture takes its name.

Painted on canvas—possibly transferred from wood(?). 2 ft. 6 in. h. × 2 ft. 1 in. w. (0·762 × 0·635).

A HISTORY OF PAINTING *vol. I.*

THE RENAISSANCE IN CENTRAL ITALY

BY HALDANE MACFALL

WITH A PREFACE BY FRANK BRANGWYN

63791

ILLUSTRATED WITH
TWENTY-SEVEN PLATES IN COLOUR

LONDON: T. C. AND E. C. JACK
16 HENRIETTA STREET, W.C.
AND EDINBURGH
1911

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PREFACE

ALTHOUGH I have little practice with the pen, I feel impelled to say a few words upon this History of Painting, and upon the man who has written it. Here is a book on painting in which the writer comes into the art and tries to appreciate it, instead of dishing up hackneyed laws and recipes for the making of it.

All arts are akin; and Haldane Macfall realises this vital fact. If the writers upon art would only hesitate at times, and remember that those who practise it have been through the difficulties of the perplexing business in their apprenticeship to their craft, and have accepted or rejected most of the theories that they pour forth as discoveries, there would be less hidebound talk about painting.

I take it that Haldane Macfall has done what we do: he has been through the toil of apprenticeship to his craft; he has found all the bookish theories to be dead stuff; and then he has gone straight to life, come to grips with life, and discovered that living art is only to be found in the interpretation of Life—in the personal expression of the impressions that life has made upon him. That, it seems to me, is the foundation of the whole thing; and that is what he here states it to be.

But it is easier to say that art should interpret life than it is to create art. The artist has to go through a mighty labour of craftsmanship before the hand answers at will to the brain. The eye runs ahead of the fingers. And the

temptation comes, after a while, to mistake the craft of the fingers for the impression or the moods that, however blundering our hands, we try to arouse in our fellow-men by our art. It is a healthy thing, then, to find a man stepping out of his art of literature, and understanding the motives that the painters have given, and are giving, their lives and careers to create, instead of trying to shackle the feet of the artist with cast-iron laws that artists do not understand, and that the writers of the next generation will scrap.

No artist of power works, or has worked, on bookish systems. No master drags out a canvas and says: By thunder! I 'll achieve the Pyramidal; here goes for Unity, inspired by Vitality, brushed in with Infinity, and qualified by Repose. This is all very well if you are trying to teach a student to become an artist in twelve lessons. I do not say that no man so paints; for one sees work at times that could have been created in no other way. But it is not the way of the masters, if it is the way of the schoolmasters. The methods and aims of an artist are deeper and more profound; they are beyond the reach of explanation and outside all recipe. No man has yet explained how to create a work of art; and, thank God, no man ever will. I do not say that the critics cannot invent a system to fathom it; I go much further, and say that the artists cannot.

Here is a book in which the writer has not concerned himself with the fact whether one master is greater than another; but has sought to understand what each artist has given his strength to express. The writers on the history of art as a rule give too much importance to the greatness of one artist over another; here we have an endeavour to find in the works of so-called lesser men those

qualities of sincerity and truth that are as vital as the greater efforts of men more richly endowed.

Here we have a history, whether we agree with it or disagree with it, which is an estimate of painting by a man who, instead of slavishly accepting cast-iron tradition, has challenged tradition from its beginnings; who has always looked upon works of art from the point of view of the artist; who has always questioned the merely scholarly verdicts on art wheresoever he has found them.

I can quite understand that the exact date at which an artist's pictures were painted, the documentary evidence as to what pictures can be attributed with certainty to him, and the complicated scientific rules and theories for deciding the authority of paintings, have an antiquarian value. But all this leaves the vital facts of art untouched.

The value of the Old Masters is enormous if we look upon their works as a superb expression of their age; more valuable still if they inspire modern painters to try and express their own age with the same power; but they are disastrous if we only try to mimic them.

There is one note in particular in these volumes that is struck again and again, and cannot be sounded too often. The moment that an artist ceases to interpret life and thinks in terms of pictures by other men instead, his creation withers, however much his craftsmanship may gain. The moment that a painter becomes a mimic of a dead Master, and only strives to repeat what has been already said with unmatchable skill, he becomes an imitator, and ceases to be an artist. This loss of originality in the endeavour to paint like others has been the chief cause of decay in every school in the past. Haldane Macfall points to this cause of decay as he reviews school

after school. It is a warning note that cannot be too strongly insisted upon to-day; for it is unfortunately only too often the proportion of his skill in imitation that draws the acclaim of critics to the work of a painter. But personality is the supreme triumph of an artist, though originality is the very thing for which he has often to suffer neglect.

In these volumes the reader is led through the great achievement of the Masters in the past, with no lack of reverence for their splendid and immortal genius; but I am glad to see this constant warning raised against the mere imitation of the dead. These Masters expressed their age once and for all. A writer to-day might just as well imitate the language and spelling of Chaucer and think that thereby he was creating art, as a painter to-day imitate the great Italians. The age that produced them is dead and gone. We live in a new age, in a changed atmosphere, and see things in a wholly different way.

We can never call back the dead past with the skill and truth with which it was recorded by the men who lived in the past, whose blood tingled with the enthusiasms and hopes and ambitions of their day. But we can learn the mighty lesson from the dead Masters to see life true. And we are fortunate to have the vast heritage of hundreds of masterpieces which, had they perished, would have left us worlds the poorer.

The man who cannot understand the relation of art to life in his own day, is little likely to understand that relation in the past. But if he has been granted this gift, it will enable him to appreciate all that is significant in the art of the past.

FRANK BRANGWYN.

FOREWORD

That man who is without the arts is little above the beasts of the field. Yet, there is no question about it, your ordinary man dreads the word Art. To him Art means Babble of strange sounds, of weird phrases; to him it stands for a little coterie of men who give themselves exclusive airs of "being in the know"—men who preen themselves upon being of a cult to which in some mysterious way they have been admitted, or the inner sanctuary of which, by some profound gifts, they have usurped, but to which the ordinary man may never even hope to attain. Indeed, it is the chief source of pride of these self-constituted elect that art is only for the few —the Chosen Souls—meaning themselves. Your ordinary man is easily convinced of his limitations; and straightway takes the apologetic attitude; avers that he "does not know anything about art"; shrugs his shoulders; and flies at the sound of the word.

As one who has essayed to create art in letters and painting, I have read the effusions and listened to the loud talk and dogged dogmas of the Cult; and I soon discovered that they knew far less of the real significance of art than many of the hundreds of youngsters who have taken a canvas and brush and paint and tried to create art. I soon discovered even more than this; I found that the creators of this exclusive cult, not only do not understand the full significance of art, but they create a wordy code of laws and rules, and try to explain by long-winded efforts, the facts of art which they do not fully understand, and they thereby set up a tangle of misleading futilities that impress the ordinary man, and drive him still farther away from art. I

will go much further. I say that the ordinary man who comes before a painting, frankly and generously ready to yield himself up to the impression that the artist has sought to arouse in his senses through his vision, will feel the significance of that art much more purely and fully than the critic who has set up for himself an elaborate code of laws founded on the achievement of one or two great masters, which standard he applies to every work of art in a calculated and death-dealing manner which destroys his capacity to receive its real significance.

In short, the expert, by book-learning and by science, may come to a wide knowledge of the history of a painting and of its maker; but he has no gifts whereby he senses the real significance of that work of art a whit better than the ordinary man, who is often endowed with superb and exquisite perception of the music that is in colour and line and mass.

It is as fatuous to measure the art of a Boucher or a Chardin by the art of a Michelangelo or a Rembrandt, as it is to measure the art of a Velazquez by the art of a Turner. The sole significance is as to whether an artist, by the wizardry of his skill, has created the impression upon our senses that he desired to create. If he shall have done so, then for us who sense it, he is a creator; if he shall have failed, then for us whom he fails to reach he does not exist as an artist.

Asked to write a general impression of the Art of Painting throughout the Ages, the which is to gather together an hundred thousand of such impressions—some vaguely enough realised—and to set them down in the deliberate and clear testament of the pen's black ink—surely no light task!—it came to me that it were as well for an artist to essay the business and thereby perhaps bring art nearer to the ordinary man. To rid the artistic endeavour as much as possible from the Museum habit and the Museum attitude towards it; surely this was worth the while!

FOREWORD

For, mark you, the artist does not create a work of art to please the experts. He does not say to himself, I will build this composition so that the professor shall say I have achieved the pyramidal; he does not employ colour-harmonics to escape the censure or win the praise of the critics. He deliberately paints the work of art so that his fellow-men may be moved by the sensations that he desires to arouse in their senses through the gift of vision. He deliberately and only creates the masterpiece in order that the ordinary man shall be roused to a sense of dignity, or horror, or sublimity, or tragedy, or laughter, or tears, or the like emotion, through the sense of colour and form. All the craftsmanship and tricks of thumb whereby he achieves this result, are but as the chips of his workshop. He does not create a work of art that the experts may say, this is done by this, or that done by that. He looks to the impression of the whole. The moment he paints only to show his cleverness, he is a second-rate, and his creative force has departed. But it is his business to master every detail and trick of craftsmanship, to employ every gift, to the utterance of the poetry that is in him. And the expert has only too often the habit of missing the significance in spying out the details and tricks of thumb.

In these pages I have simply written of the greater men of genius who have contributed to the art of painting; and I have touched upon their more famous works rather than attempted an exhaustive list of all their endeavour, the which has no value except to the dealer in antiques. The volumes are an attempt to place before the ordinary man the chief achievement of the years in the Art of Painting; and to hint at something of the real significance of that achievement.

I have avoided all the clap-trap of so-called criticism; you shall find no such pedantries as bottega *for "workshop," a good sound English word; the ghastly* epigoni *or bastard* epigones

you shall find used never for "imitators" or "copyists," the more so since "disciples" better fits many followers of a great artist, for they are often much more than copyists or imitators. I give you no fantastic pedant's balderdash about "tactile values" *or* "space composition"; *about your* "vasomotor system" *or* "the materially significant" *or your* "ideated sensations." *Each year brings forth a further crop of these futilities. I am wholly unconcerned with discovering little mediocre men because they worked in the Italian Renaissance, and are long since deservedly dead. When works of art are torn from the place that they were created to adorn, ana are set up in Museums, they have already passed into the graveyard of their significance. A* Crucifixion *in a dining-room has lost its savour, its essential meaning, and its authority.*

When I speak of an Illustration, *I mean an illustration, whether it be by Raphael or by a hack-artist on the* Illustrated London News; *I do not split logic to define the difference—there is none. When I speak of* Beauty, *I mean beauty; when I say* Decoration, *I mean decoration—as any ordinary man conceives these words. It is far more simple than explaining Decoration to be something else, which, though it may prove the cleverness of the critic, were as though one held that a chalk-pit were a Spanish onion.*

Let me add here a truth that has been convincingly borne in upon me in the presence of all master-work in whatsoever art. The elaborate laws and technique-mongering of the academies and of the critics had small concern for the creative artist. The artist bends every means to his end that may help to utter the emotion he desires to express. He, as often as not, does the thing half unwitting of the law of craft he is setting up, bent wholly on the perfecting of the impression. Take so profound a master as Leonardo da Vinci. *When he paints maidenhood, he is concerned with its modesty, its timidities, its untried experience about*

to be essayed, the mystery of virginity—when he paints the sovereign woman, sure of her spell, he utters her sphinx-like exultation, as La Forgue *uttered it in his triumphant "I am Woman!" Whatsoever was the significance of the thing he desired to create, that he wrought with all his strength, to that he brought his compelling will; and, the moment he had achieved it, the thing interested him no more, and he left it in order to get him to other conquests.*

The whole history of life, of man, and of art, is a tale of Development—*Evolution, as the professors have it. So, too, in Painting. We see the artist first drawing the outline of things; then he fills the space with flat colour; he conquers the flatness of the painted surface. Then he essays to conquer the depth of things seen, as in a mirror. He moves always towards realism —towards uttering the sensations by means of colour and form that compel the mind at once to grasp the significance of the painted objects. The realm of the Art of Painting, so far from being exhausted, increases its domain in every century—at times by such small advances as almost to show no advance. But steadily, as man's sensations of the experience of life increase, so increases his generosity of soul to share those sensations of experiences with his fellows. His path thereto is through the faculty of the arts. Therefore it is by the arts alone that man shall reach to the fulness of life.*

I cannot let these volumes go forth from the printing-press without acknowledgment of a heavy debt to the aid which I have received from my friend, T. Leman Hare, *in the procuring of illustrations in colour from masterpieces scattered abroad throughout Europe. The publishers have only been balked in reaching a few supreme masterpieces by such rare difficulties as the bad lighting of works which are rigidly fixed in position, or otherwise beyond the reach of the colour camera;*

FOREWORD

and without Hare's dogged efforts to reach certain masterpieces herein displayed, and without his keen supervision of the production of the plates, a large part of the intention of this History must have failed. To the many private owners my gratitude is, in poor fashion enough, here expressed; and I cannot lay down the pen without thanks to the Editor of The Studio *for the use of several colour-blocks in the last volume.*

HALDANE MACFALL.

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NOTE

A *Maestà* is the Christ or the Virgin in glory.
A *Pietà* is the dead Christ mourned by the Virgin.
A *Tondo* is a circular picture.
A *Predella* is the panel at the base of an altarpiece.

ITALY
FRIULI
Udine
VENETIA
Trieste
Venice
Milan
LOMBARDY
PIEDMONT
Turin
Alessandria
Piacenza
Parma
Reggio
Ferrara
Genoa
Bologna
Ravenna
Florence
Pisa
Leghorn
LIGURIAN SEA
TUSCANY
Siena
ADRIATIC SEA
DALMATIA
Perugia
UMBRIA
CORSICA
Civitavecchia
Rome
Capua
Naples
Ischia
Capri
Salerno
TYRRHENIAN SEA
SARDINIA
Messina
Palermo
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Catania
HALDANE MACFALL

A HISTORY OF PAINTING

INTRODUCTION

I. *The Ultimate Significance of all Art*

He who would understand the Art of Painting must first understand the significance of all Art, of which Painting is but a part.

The most vastly interesting thing to man is Life.

Whence it comes, whither it goes—these are a part of the Eternal Mystery. But we can, and ought to know all of life 'twixt its coming and its going.

Now, we can only know life in two ways—either by Personal Experience of it; or, at second hand, through its transference to us by Communion with our fellow-men. But our Personal adventures in life, even though we should be granted the destiny to bestride the world like a Napoleon, can at best be but a small and parochial affair, after all 's said, when set against the multitudinous experience of our generation. Shut off from communion with our fellows, we should walk but in a blind man's parish. But it is given to us to know of life through our fellows by their communion to us of their Thoughts and their Sensations. And so, just as by Speech we communicate our thoughts and ideas to others; so by Art we may communicate our sensations, the emotions we feel, through the gift of being able to arouse in their senses what our senses have felt—whether into their hearing by sounds, as in Music; or by the emotional employment of words, as in the poetry of prose,

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or of verse, or of oratory; or through the sight by the rhythmic use of colour and forms, as in Painting; or by form, as in Sculpture; or by the union of these, as in the drama, or architecture, or the like.

Art, then, is the Emotional Utterance of Life. Art is *our emotional means of communion with our fellows.*

And just as Speech must be an intelligent utterance of Thought; so must Art be an intelligent utterance of Emotion—of Things Felt quite apart from Reason or Intellect.

Now, it is not enough to have uttered a Thought to account it Speech; it is essential that the Thought shall be so uttered as to arouse the like thought in the hearer—otherwise are we in a Babel of Strange Sounds.

So, it is not enough to have uttered Emotion to account it Art; it is essential that the Emotion shall have been so uttered as to arouse the like Emotion in the onlooker—otherwise are we but in a tangled whirl of confusion.

Therefore, just as Thought is the more perfectly and swiftly understood as it is deftly expressed; so is Emotion the more powerfully felt as it is most perfectly uttered. In other words, the Craftsmanship of Art will generally be beautiful; but it must be compelling—it must arouse the subtle thing called Sensation in our emotions before it can create Art. Craftsmanship, then, is the grammar or tool of Art.

Now we have arrived at the fact that Speech is the means of communion of the Intellect; Art is the means of communion of the Senses. *There* is the marked difference.

A confusion, created by the Greeks, and repeated by the pedants of the centuries, has arisen in confusing Art with Beauty. That Art is Beauty, or has any concern

with Beauty, is wholly untenable. If not, then the greatest masterpieces of the ages must be wholly rejected; and small things that have no concern whatever with Art must be raised to masterpieces of Art.

This confusion has largely arisen owing to the confusion of Art with its tool, Craftsmanship.

A poker may be a beautiful thing—it is not art. A photograph may be beautiful—it is not art. A woman may be beautiful—she is not necessarily a work of art.

Art must *create*—it must transfer Sensation from the creator of it to us.

The Greek genius set up Beauty as the ultimate goal of Life—it therefore set up Beauty as the ultimate goal of Art. The Greeks really did mean that beauty of craftsmanship alone was not enough—that Art must always *create* Beauty. This absolute aim to achieve Beauty was the cause of the triumph of Greece in Art—a greatly overrated triumph when set against the whole meaning of life, and one of which the professors tell us much; it was also the cause of her limitations and of her eventual failure to achieve the supreme mastery of the world, of which we hear little. For, splendid as was the mighty achievement of Greece, she never reached to the majesty and the grandeur of that masterpiece of sculpture that stands upon the edge of Africa, head and shoulders above her achievement, in the wondrous thing that is called the Sphinx. The genius of Egypt spent itself upon the majesty and the mystery of life—and it moved thereby to a higher aim.

Craftsmanship—that skill of cunning whereby the artist so employs the clay of the sculptor, the colours of the painter, the words of the poet in prose, or verse, or oratory, and bends and compels these things into such rhythmic

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forms and combinations that they create a thrill in our senses and arouse the desired emotion—this craftsmanship is so fascinating to the mind of man that it, not unnaturally, looms out of place in the eyes of such as do not create Art, yet become inquisitive as to why they are moved by Art.

When a school arose, but a little while ago, that had for its battle-cry the still smaller aim of Art for Art's sake, it really meant that Art was for Craft's sake—that the aim of Art lay solely in the beauty of its craftsmanship. They would have the play of *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark. In the deeps of their confusion, what they said was this: that if a master-hand painted a wall white very beautifully, by his mastery of thumb he created Art! Otherwise there were no need to say that Art was for Art's sake. Of course, Art is for Art's sake. But it were well to know what is Art. This narrow-eyed school of theorists whittled away the whole function of Art until they reduced it to craft—exactly what it is not. And in proportion as their folly grew, their arrogance mounted. So that they made of a Truth an utter Falsity—simply in that they did not know what Art was!

Whistler would have had us believe that it is the province of Art to say Nothing very Beautifully; his instincts and his genius made no such mistake. He is the master of a subtle emotional statement that, in its realm, has never been surpassed. He vowed that Art was the Science of the Beautiful—which were no mean definition of Craft, and had been no bad definition of Art, but that Art is not Science, and is not Beauty. It was of the wisdom of that wiseacre who defined a Crab as a scarlet reptile that walks backwards—which were not so bad, were it a reptile, were it scarlet, and did it walk backwards.

Neither Whistler, nor Flaubert, nor another has the

right to narrow the acreage of the garden of life. What concern had Shakespeare with Beauty? In the Book of Life that Shakespeare wrote, Beauty is not his god—Beauty is not his ultimate aim. Is jealousy beautiful? Yet *Othello* is great art. Is man's ineffectual struggle against destiny beautiful? Yet *Hamlet* is rightly accounted a masterpiece of the ages. Are hate and despair and fear and remorse beautiful? It has been written of late that Millet's *Killing of a Hog* is beautiful! It is wholly unbeautiful. Had Millet made it beautiful he had uttered the stupidest of lies. Nevertheless, the statement of it is art. Indeed, Millet's aim in art, a large part of his significance in art, is a protest against the pettiness of mere beauty. He took the earth, this great-soul'd man, and he wrought with a master's statement the pathos and the tragedy and the might and the majesty of the earth and of them that toil upon the earth. The *Sower* and the *Man with the Hoe* are far more than beautiful—they hold the vast emotions and wondrous sensations of man's destiny to labour, and of man's acceptance of that destiny; they utter the gloom and the ugliness as loudly as the beauty of the earth and of toil; and they most rightly utter these things, so that they take equal rank, and thereby add to our knowledge of the emotions of life through the master's power, and the skill and cunning of his craftsmanship, whereby he so solemnly uttered the truth.

Art is not an oil-painting on canvas in a gilt frame. Art is not the exclusive toy of a few prigs—nor the password of a cult. Art is universal, eternal—not parochial. Every man is an artist in his degree—every man is moved by art in his degree. For one act of our day to which we are moved by reason, we are moved to a score by our emotions—by instinct.

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If the artist's revelation of life be true, then by and through his art we live the emotions of life; it becomes a part of our life for ever. If the revelation be ennobling, we are ennobled; if base, we are debased thereby.

And surely it is a splendid thing to be made to thrill with the higher emotions of man and to know lofty enthusiasms! The brightest path by which man may reach to great goals and a larger concept of life is through the arts. Whether by the oratory of the Christ, or by the drama of the masters, or whatsoever pathway, the road that reaches to the Splendid Wayfaring must be through the garden of the Arts.

Whether he will it or not, every man must walk in that garden of the Arts.

No man may know the Splendid Wayfaring of Life, nor indeed know of Life outside a madhouse, without Art. Art is absolutely necessary to all civilised life. It is with us from the cradle to the grave. We cannot escape it. The moment a child essays to tell of its joy or its pain, its sorrows or its delights, at once Art is created.

So far from being the little exclusive preciosity that the so-called Elect pride themselves alone on understanding, if you would realise what your life would be without the means to commune with your fellow-men so as to be partakers of their sensations and their emotions, try to think of a man in that awful solitude that is never broken by contact with any other human soul; and you scarce exaggerate what a man's punishment would be without the arts.

Now it follows that as a people become ignoble, their utterance of life becomes ignoble, therefore their art becomes ignoble.

There has ever been in all religions, in all states, a

tendency of narrow-eyed men to a curious form of Puritanism that looks askance at all works of art as being bad, because bad art is bad. Whether it be a Savonarola in the Catholic church who sets the people in hysterical fervour to burning all the precious works of art in the bonfires of the public market-place; or the Roundheads who disfigure and destroy works of art in childish wantonness and blatant vulgarity; whether it be the Mohammedan who denies the human figure to art; or what not; yet, so vital a necessity is art to the human being in his wayfaring to the heights and majesty of sublime living, that the blackest Puritans employ it even whilst they destroy it.

The Mohammedans are forbidden the carving of figures in or on their mosques; forbidden the portraiture of men, lest the faithful shall fall to the worship of images—yet the True Believer flings away his life in battle, like some great bronze god, urged to it by the emotional oratory of his faith; and, where he falls, you shall ever find about his neck, worn as a little charm to keep his quaint fantastic soul from harm, sewn into exquisitely wrought leatherwork, fragments of the mighty literature of the Koran! An art within an art!

So the Roundheads, thundering against the arts lest they should turn men's eyes to graven images, made the land hideous with sculptures overthrown, statues mutilated, works of art destroyed; yet, even as they committed this scandalous and childish wantonness, in the name of the Lord, they listened with bowed heads of reverence to works of fiction, some amongst the supreme works of art the world has known—the parables of the Man of Sorrows—and went into battle shouting the poetry of the psalms, their nerves athrill to the music of words wrought by the master-skill of the great Elizabethan translators of the Bible!

II. *Wherein is attempted a survey of the Art of Antiquity—and an explanation of the terms Classic, Byzantine, Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, and Humanism.*

It is the habit of the professor to begin his theories on art by some such statement as that the first need of the human being was to clothe himself, and fashion tools and weapons and shelter against the fury of the elements and wild nature—that he had to become industrious before he became an artist.

The professor says this because he mistakes Art to be a painting on a canvas in a gold frame, or a piece of sculpture, or the like. In such case his platitudes would be true enough. As a matter of fact, Art was as overwhelming a need of the human being from the very first as was his need for industry. Man, as an intelligent being, has created Art from the beginning—probably as soon as he discovered the need for industry. From the day that, having stepped down from the branch of a tree and stood up, on his hind legs, and discovered himself the Thinking Thing, Art was at its dawning. From the tree to his wild cave, whence he slowly began to forgather in the valley to his tribal councils against wild animals and other enemies, and to rally for his hunting; *from the moment that he desired communion with his fellows*, then Art was born. For, just as by his rude speech he sought communion with their thoughts, so by means of his rude arts he essayed to make his fellows feel what he had felt by getting to their senses what his own senses had experienced.

'Twas like enough that song and dance and the telling of tales were his first forms of art; but early in his rude days he scratched upon the reindeer's bone and upon the

walls of his cave the impressions of life as he felt them; and decorated himself and his belongings to impress others with his barbaric dignities and ambitions. And just as in tale-telling and song and dance he roused his fellows to feel what he felt; so he soon came to putting colours upon the rude drawings and sculpturings that his hand essayed, so that his fellows should feel through their sense of vision what his own eyes experienced. And the art of painting was born.

Therefore, when the professors, splitting hairs, tell us that art has this difference from man's other activities, in that it is not for *utility*, he is thinking of palaces and gorgeous paintings in elaborate frames, and the like; but art is deeper than this, and is not only an utility but an absolute necessity of life. To the luxurious, art may be made a luxury; but luxurious art is not the highest form of art. And to conceive of Art as a luxury or a diversion is to miss its whole significance. The moment Art becomes a luxury or a mere diversion it is in decay; and the significance has gone out of it. One might as wisely say that Cleopatra dead is as significant as Cleopatra alive—the beautiful body is there, but the wondrous miracle has departed from it. The whole falsity about art is created by the fact that the professors only seem to discover works of art when they are in decay.

So, it is likely enough, our first rude ancestors came to apply the recording of their emotions, the utterance of their sensations, to the glorification of those deep and awful feelings of man that seek utterance in religion; and the carved and moulded gods were raised upon the rude altars of their fantastic faiths, and colours were plastered upon wall and god and idol to enhance the wild emotions of awe roused by their faith.

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For painting, mark you, was not of necessity a flat art, but employed in the round as well.

Thence through the Stone Age, when man knew no metals, but lived in lake-dwellings, and built the mighty stone blocks upon the earth, and began to know the sowing of corn and the reaping and harvesting, and the taming of animals that went to make his flocks and herds, and forthwith discovered flax for the weaving of his garments; thence he came to the moulding of gold and copper, the first metals he employed; thence to tin; on until he discovered how to fuse tin and copper into bronze, which thrust him forward on his upward wayfaring; until he stood but a thousand years before the coming of the Christ, the arts were increasing with the increasing range of man's upward striving.

The Egyptians, long before they used bronze and iron, were turning pots and painting them; and before the Pharaohs came, bringing to the banks of the Nile the use of metals, Egypt was painting the human figure and animals, in rude fashion. The Pharaohs came to govern the land some four thousand five hundred years before Christ, and under them Egypt became the first people of the earth to raise great buildings of stone, and employed therein and in sculpture a skill that has never been surpassed. And the walls of their ancient tombs were wrought with paintings, essaying to utter every phase of life—royal victories, religious adoration and rites, the acts of daily life, the soul's journeying to the place of the dead. Landscape is used for backgrounds, if rude enough and lacking as to perspective. Painting was mere colouring, 'tis true, without sense of light and shade. But to the Egyptian the vast mystery of Eternity ever loomed before all else—for Eternity he wrought his arts, whether the mighty pyramids, the sculptured sphinxes, and vasty temples; for Eternity he embalmed his dead.

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Side by side with Egypt the Chaldeans wrought by the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates, and their peoples, the Babylonians and Assyrians, after them, wrought paintings and coloured friezes glorifying strength and power and brute force, that found their outlet in cruel delights, bloody butcheries in war, brutal revenges, barbarous huntings and slayings. And it was from Chaldæa—from these Assyrians—that the Greeks, and from the Greeks the modern world, received the winged bodies of men and animals so dear to the decorative instinct of the ages.

It was in Chaldæa and Egypt, then, that what art of painting there was, flourished before the Greek.

To the early Greeks came the aim of Beauty, perfection of form, and above all the beauty of the Human. These early Greeks of the islands and sea-coasts of the Ægean created a civilisation that had passed and was but a memory when Homer struck his lyre some eight hundred years before the coming of the Christ—three thousand years before Salome danced before Herod, these seafaring folk had been using copper, which they found in large quantities in their island of Cyprus—does not indeed the very name of copper come from this same Kupros? And always the aim is to fashion the human form—and what is more, the habit of Egypt and Chaldæa is swept aside, and the nude is ever in the vogue—the very jugs and the jars being modelled on the human design. When Troy was unburied, six cities deep, one upon another, the painting habit appears in the sixth, the uppermost buried one, vases being discovered with paintings upon them, as Priam's artists had painted them before Achilles dragged the body of Hector round the walls; whilst, hard by, at Tiryns, a palace revealed its walls painted and decorated. At Cnossus, in Crete, in that 'Palace of the Axe' where king Minos

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ruled, and which from its confusion of paths and passages gave us the word "labyrinth," is much painting on the walls, and wondrously modern in feeling. Thus was art rapidly advancing in Mycenæ when the northern barbarians fell upon and swept away the first Greek civilisation, before Homer. But the Greeks, fleeing before the onrush, spread their art to Chios and Cyprus and the coasts of Asia Minor and Syria—and it was the descendants of these who, after three hundred years, took back to the barbarians of Greece the seed of the Renaissance of art which was to be there planted again and to blossom to such splendid flowering.

The new Greek civilisation advanced with giant strides. Unlike all other peoples before them or of their time, the Greek loved liberty—he looked to beauty as his aim in life—and the earth on which he stood held the stone best fitted for his artistry: marble abounded in the land, and some of the islands, such as the famed Paros, were little else. Liberty was in his blood, it was his very instinct; progress was his breath; and the human entity his god. From Egypt and Assyria he caught the fashioning of sculpture, but soon left all tradition behind in his aim to glorify the human in marble. Five hundred years before the Christ, the Greeks were sculpturing winged goddesses, the woman appears in natural form, and the smile ripples across the face of the human—and not only does the passing mood of the human take possession of the face, but the figures are painted. What wall-paintings there were have perished; but the earlier vases with black figures and the later ones with red figures show astounding sense of design. Rapidly the arts developed. Pindar sang; and Æschylus wrote his tragedies; and soon Myron and Polyclitus and Phidias were creating their masterpieces, glorifying human beauty and athletic strength; with the

figure leaning on one foot instead of the stolid Egyptian and Assyrian art that ever set the human with both feet firm planted on the earth—and the ideal woman was the Amazon or huntress. So it came that Pericles, the lover of the beautiful, and dictator of beauty as of all else to the Greece of his day, called Phidias to the beautifying of Athens, raising the famed Parthenon upon her heights, one of the achievements of the ages. Here were paintings upon the walls, but they have vanished, as has the gold and ivory statue of Athene, the masterpiece of Phidias. Yet one cannot but think that the high gifts that created the mighty masterpiece of the Venus of Milo, whether wrought immediately after Phidias or within three hundred years thereafter, must have been highly skilled also in *painting* forms.

The serene temper of the Greece of the four hundreds before Christ came to an end with the Peloponnesian War which Pericles had begun, and which, twenty-five years after Pericles died of the plague, saw Athens fall in 404 B.C. The disaster that saw Athens conquered and humiliated by the Spartans roused that deep religious and political reaction which sent Socrates to his death in 399 B.C. and changed the Greek character. Plato carried on the thought of Socrates—and Greece knew self-examination, and brooded upon the deep problems of the soul. Adversity taught its lesson. The three hundreds before Christ were years of deep meditation, and Art, grappling with the utterance of the new emotions, brought forth Praxiteles and Scopas, and Praxiteles created the beautiful and spiritual head of his famed Hermes. Here we have the sculptor ridding his art of hardnesses, employing the effects of the differences of texture, as in the hair and flesh, and softening the edges of the flesh until a painter's sense of impressionism in light and shade diffuses the sculptured surface and makes the

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marble live. Therefrom we may judge that painting in Hellas, lauded by the ancient writers as equal to her sculptures, must have been astounding—but in how great degree we shall never know, since all sign of these wonders has passed away. Yet we may trust the ancient writers, since they clearly state that whilst Polygnotus, the supreme painter of the century of Phidias, was famed for his drawing rather than for his colour, the masters of the century of Praxiteles were famed as colourists. Parrhasius, Zeuxis, and Apelles, therefore, had they carried painting to the degree of melting their light and shade and colour as far as Praxiteles had softened the surfaces of his sculptured marble, must have reached a power in uttering feeling in painting far greater than any primitive painters of whatsoever later schools. And when we remember how Scopas went even beyond the emotional statement of revery of the marbles carved by Praxiteles, and gave utterance to the passions in his haunting shadows about eyes and mouth, it is unlikely that the painters did not grasp the skill with which Scopas modelled those wondrous shadows. 'Tis true a younger sculptor than these, one Lysippus, essayed to put back the hands of Greek art by a reactionary trying back to the sterner and less subtle emotional days of the century of Phidias, mistaking sentiment for sentimentality, and fearing effeminacy and sensuality; but he only ran to the academic by trying to see the human as eight heads high, and whilst rejecting emotion to the degree of passion, only ended in elegance, refinement, and nervousness in the bronzes which he preferred to cast instead of employing the marble preferred by Praxiteles and Scopas; Lysippus was sculptor to Alexander the Great, and his mastery of drapery strongly suggests the influence of the painters. But it is in the greatest draped statue in movement left by

antiquity, the famed winged *Niké* (*Victory*) *of Samothrace*, poised on the prow of a galley, her robes fluttering in the breeze, that the influence of Scopas is seen in supreme fashion; and the influence of great painting is astoundingly suggested in the years on the eve of the two hundreds before Christ.

The year of 336 B.C. struck; and its striking was full of a strange destiny for the wide world. Young Alexander, a youth of twenty, stepped to his father's throne in Macedonia, and began his short, swift, all-compelling and wondrous career. Swiftly he laid waste Thebes, overwhelmed Athens, moved out across the face of the world with his conquering Greeks, overthrowing kings, marching from victory to victory through Asia Minor, on through Syria, winning Egypt, overthrowing Persia, and sweeping over the north of India—to die in Babylon at thirty-three! The conquered world fell to his generals, and the Greek order stood supreme from the waters of the Nile to the far Indus. To India she gave her lesson in the arts, that had begun to dawn out of Persia. From Greece the art of painting passed into India with Alexander the Great; and later on to China, whither bastard Greek art spread from the Black Sea through Siberia and Central Asia in our own "mediæval" days some hundred years after Christ.

But the Greek thought and the Greek art passed out of Athens and spread over the conquered lands—and made their throne in Alexandria with the Ptolemies, in Syrian Antioch, and in Pergamum in Asia Minor. The small Greek states, with their free cities, now became oriental monarchies under absolute tyrants. These two hundred years, from the death of Alexander to the conquest by Rome are spoken of by the academic as a decadence. They were instead a forward moving of the human soul. The ancient

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spirit of Greece was gone, it is true; but a new and compelling spirit was abroad. Greek art, faced now by the tumult and anguish of the human soul amidst the chaos of change, uttered itself in heroic admiration of pity for the sufferings of man. Heretofore, art had evaded character; portraiture was now born. At Pergamum and Rhodes and Alexandria, the Greek artist began to look upon the barbarians as fit subjects for sympathy and wonder, and the *Gaul Slaying Himself after Slaying his Wife*, and *The Dying Gaul* (*Gladiator*) were created, in which last the Greek sculptor, Epigonus, shows the pathos of the brave fellow whose blood ebbs from him as he lies far away from his "small barbarians at play." This emotional statement of the agonies, that would have shocked the earlier Greeks, perhaps best known to literature through the fame of *Laocoon and his Sons*, greatly enlarged the province and realm of art, and increased its function and significance, thereby adding to the breadth of its appeal. It is a merely childish and academic thing to compare one phase of art with the art of another age; for art has no concern with such things. The art of *The Dying Gaul* and of the *Laocoon* is concerned with another phase of the human emotions than that of older Greece. Pity and the significance of suffering have now forced themselves as a significance upon the human feelings, where before was little or none. The technical powers of the artists may not be as astounding as those of a Phidias, a Praxiteles, or a Scopas, but there is freedom from the mere imitation of their skill of hand as there is from slavery to their thought and intention. And there are qualities dawning which are to ripen in after centuries into majestic achievement—life is looked full in the face, character and truth stand forth, and landscape receives homage.

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The masterpieces of the great Greek painters are but a legend. But the Romans, as they made their conquests in Greece, brought back a taste for Greek works of art, and were early attracting Greek artists to Rome. The empire increased the collecting of Greek works. In Pompeii and Herculaneum, two seaside pleasure resorts, overwhelmed by Vesuvius in the year 79 after Christ, have been found a goodly number of wall-paintings which, allowing for the second-rate taste that would prevail in a pleasure-resort not too famous for the nobility of its high living or aims, prove a wide and remarkable activity in painting. And from Egypt have come the famous portraits in encaustic painting from the first centuries of the Roman Empire, and known as the encaustic portraits of the Græco-Roman period, which show high artistry.

Now, it is well to note that whilst Rome took much from the tradition of ancient Greece, she also had latent artistic gifts which were created partly out of the Italian soil, and partly out of the Eastern Mediterranean whence she largely came. She built temples, baths, triumphal arches, columns, and the like, which had no outside influence. The "arenas" or circuses, such as the Coliseum, were new. She employed the dome and the arch, of which Greece knew nothing—but which came to Rome out of Assyria and the East, and thereby produced Romanesque architecture, and thereby partly produced Byzantine. Her sculpture never reached to Greek heights; but her architecture took on the vastness of Eastern ambitions; and the sculpture of the Empire at least put forth strength in character and thereby produced fine portraiture. In painting there was latent genius, and some of the paintings at Pompeii show an astounding affinity to the French work of the seventeen hundreds; whilst, in the catacombs, Christian art had its beginnings.

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Throughout the Middle Ages, the innate Italian impetus towards Realism in painting struggled hard to evolve itself against the Byzantine-Greek spirit that ever threatened from the East; but it was not until the close of the Middle Ages, in the thirteen hundreds, that at last Italian Realism shook off the Eastern pattern of Byzantine, crept out over the land, and, fired by the Gothic realism of France, dawned in the Renaissance.

To get a thorough grip upon the fact of the Renaissance, it is well to understand exactly what is meant by Byzantine. The early Christian paintings were made by a persecuted people who, to practise their religion, had to meet together in the underground tunnels, called catacombs, of Rome, where they also buried their dead. These catacombs were the church and burial-place of the early Christians from about one hundred years to about four hundred years after Christ.

When Christianity came above ground and became the religion of the State, burial and worship also came to the surface.

Now the chief craft employed in the catacombs was painting; thus Christianity was destined to produce a great achievement in painting from its very beginnings. Sculpture in the round was repugnant to the early Christians, as being the craft employed in making the gods of their pagan masters, and thereby associated with the worship of idols; and even in painting, the same intention created a repugnance to representing their own God—indeed, even the crucified Christ only began to be treated in the art of the catacombs towards the very end. Symbols arose, such as the peacock for eternity; but, except that painting shrank from the nude, and created certain symbols and

motives in the spirit of its own revelation, the painters all along employed pagan imagery and forms, and you shall find in their design the Orpheus, Cupids, the Medusa head, and the like paganisms, just as the state Christianity later took from paganism its pagan altars and symbols, such as the lights ; whilst the style and treatment are akin to the wall-paintings of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Byzantium (Constantinople) became the capital of Eastern Christendom in 330 after Christ. The Roman Court went to Ravenna, on the east side of Italy, in 404. About 500 Theodoric, the king of the Goths, settled his residence thereat, and from some thirty to forty years thereafter, for more than two centuries, Ravenna belonged to Byzantium—thus the spirit of Byzantium (Constantinople) hung upon the edge of Italy.

Now, when Christianity arose from its underground life in the catacombs, and came to the surface, it built for itself, or took possession of, the large marts or places of assembly, a long rectangular hall, flat-roofed, often with side aisles, and called a basilica—just as to-day it might take for use the town-hall ; for the Christian church was a place of assembly for worship, differing vastly therein from the pagan temple, which was the place of residence of the god.

To this square, flat-roofed Italian basilica, the Eastern spirit of the Christian church at Byzantium brought the domed roofing of the East ; of which the world-famed church of St. Sophia in Constantinople is the great example—built in the mid five hundreds by Asiatic architects, and for long the cathedral of the Eastern Christians, until Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453, when in Italy the Renaissance was in its full flowering. Now, we have already seen the Romans of the Empire employing the dome, as in the Pantheon. But the Byzantine art held

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the love of sumptuous splendour of colouring, brought from the East; and concerned itself with gorgeous colouring and much use of gold and gilding—its whole spirit was Asiatic and luxurious, and shows its design in the oriental carpet, far removed from the severe achievement of Greek and Roman art—it abhors the human figure, and concerns itself with geometrical and conventional pattern. This orientalised art of the Eastern Christianity of Byzantium was further accentuated by the fanatical movement of the ascetic Iconoclasts (Image-Breakers) in the seven and eight hundreds, when, throughout the Eastern world of Christianity, vast numbers of works of art were destroyed as tending towards idolatry. The sculptors and artists fled west, and many reached the court of Charlemagne at Aix-la-Chapelle. On the overthrow of the Iconoclasts about 850, the arts had a mighty renaissance in the Byzantine Empire, lasting throughout the nine hundreds and much of the ten hundreds, until about the years that William the Conqueror came to rule over us in the West. This great Byzantine achievement, in arms and general prosperity and intellect, saw much painting on parchment and enamelling, besides superb goldsmith's work; but its chief glory was in the mosaic. Yet its theatricality, its poverty of means to utter art, and its rigid and hidebound limits, could not be wholly hidden under its love of sumptuous splendour of colouring; and it early became petrified even in its majestic intention. Then the Arab invasion swept across the sea out of Asia, overthrowing the Eastern Christianity, but stealing much of its art, and creating the elaborate patterns that are called *arabesques*. To Russia the Byzantine art fled, and lives to this day in her church and religion. To Southern Italy also Byzantium was long dictator; she dominated Ravenna in Eastern Italy, and her vast wealth, her wide-ranging com-

merce, and her sumptuous splendour appealed to Venice, which built in 1100 her famous Byzantine Church of St. Mark's; and even the artistry of mediæval Europe was tinged with the Byzantine spirit. The pomp and splendour of the Byzantine, hiding its emptiness of high emotion and a noble feeling under a gorgeous formality, threatened to fall on Italy, standing ghoul-like, a nightmare ever looming upon her Eastern frontiers, to be dissolved and banished at last by the innate love of truth and reality latent in the soil of Italy, that found its mouthpiece at last in Duccio and Giotto, who found a new revelation in art, seeing life with fresh eyes, and seeking skill of hand to state what they saw, thereby bringing the mighty re-birth of the Renaissance into the land.

Whilst the Eastern Christian church was developing Byzantinism, the Western Christian church, after Charlemagne's death, proceeded to build upon its basilicas the domed roof, and to add the towers of what is called Romanesque architecture. The Romanesque in turn gave way to the Gothic. Now, the large wall spaces of the heavily built, round-arched, Romanesque churches did not call out for painting, since they were ill lit; whilst the pointed-arched, high, widely fretted and fragile tracery of the Gothic architecture, nearly all windows and little wall space, did not leave room for wall paintings. Thus wall-painting, so intrinsic an art of early Christianity in the catacombs, fell away when Christianity came out of the earth and built her domed basilicas of the Romanesque period, and later her many-windowed fretted traceries of the Gothic years. But the Gothic windows had to be filled in with glass; and this glass came to be beautifully coloured—creating the great Gothic art of glass-painting, the bright colouring of which had so profound an influence

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upon the painting of the Renaissance. Side by side with this glass-painting went the exquisite illumination of manuscripts. The Gothic had also another, a vital, quality that raised it above the Romanesque—it rejected convention and went to nature for its sculpturing—so that you shall find recorded on Gothic architecture the fulness of life as the Middle Ages knew it; the moods of the passing seasons, the life of the fields, or the life of the craftsman and of the buyers, and of the warrior and the like. The aim of Gothic art is not beauty nor pleasure, but to teach. It is true that the teaching of the Middle Ages was austere enough, concerned more with the harsh and greyer virtues of the fear of damnation rather than with the tender humanities, appealing to the reason rather than to the heart—an age in which the poet, such as Dante, brooded on hells and punishments, and saw life a sombre affair—an age when "opinions," except such as the Church approved, meant burning at the stake or the like hellishness.

But out of Gothic art was born the glorification of character—the great art of portraiture—in those recumbent effigies of the dead, lying carved in stone upon their tombs. The nude is almost wholly absent; and, strange to say, whether in carving or aught else, Gothic art failed to create a Christ, even an infant Christ, of supreme achievement.

At last the Renaissance dawned over Italy and France and Flanders. Re-birth it truly was not, for Art never dies. But a new spirit was passing across the face of Europe. Life, and with it Art, was evolving, stepping to further fulfilment. And Humanism was lagely responsible for it. The Church had been teacher since Rome fell; but she had become alarmed at her own teaching, and was harshly punishing all such teaching as she did not herself approve.

OF PAINTING

It was too late. Humanism, an inquisitive eagerness to dip into the history and arts and achievement of antiquity, above all, the grandeur of Greece, arose to bring a splendid discontent to men.

Just as the Greek fugitives, before the Homeric years, had fled to the south carrying their ancient arts with them, and these arts had returned again in after centuries to the barbarian conquerors of Greece, and created the Greek masters ; so in the thirteen-hundreds, at the ending of the Middle Ages called Dark, the descendants of the old Roman days of greatness, inspired by the Greeks, brought back to Italian soil the traditions of a pagan and heroic past, and planted the same in Florence and Rome, to the fertilising and blossoming and fruition of the Renaissance.

The state of the art of painting from the decline of Hellenic art in the years of Christ to the end of the Dark Ages, is perhaps best grasped by taking such portraits from mummy-cases as were discovered in Egypt by Professor Flinders Petrie, and now in the National Gallery in London, wherein we see the Græco-Roman protraiture of the first two or three hundred years after Christ, if not of the days of Christ—these are in the wax medium of ancient Greece known as "encaustic"—and then looking upon the painting of a Tuscan painter, working in the neighbourhood of Florence at the end of the Dark Ages a thousand years afterwards, when Christianity, come above ground from its hiding-places, had taken to itself much of the pagan thought and forms and had absorbed them, and had, for its decorative symbols, developed Byzantine formality into such splendour as the rigid forms and bright colouring of mosaic yielded. This glowing but stiff formalism of Byzantine decoration, whether in the "miniatures," as the illuminations of its elaborate documents are called, or in its richly

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coloured, much be-gilt mosaics, was wholly given up to the service of the Church, which ever grew in power; and, as it so increased, the Church demanded increasing splendour to impose upon the mind of man; and just as the religion of the Church set into a splendid formality and elaborate convention, so the Byzantine art set with it, and answered to it astounding well; and exactly as the Church strangled all individual thought and action, so the Byzantine art, with its narrow scope, suited the Church which it adorned and expressed with rigorous narrowness and sumptuous splendour, uttered in formal schemes which strangled all individual statement and repeated set forms. Byzantium sent forth her painters throughout Italy and the wide Christian world, and set her vogue upon Italy. And we shall find in Tuscany, in the neighbourhood of Florence, at the end of the Dark Ages, on the edge of the dawn of the Renaissance, no better example of the Byzantine art than in such a painter as the Tuscan MARGARITONE d'Arezzo, or di Magnano, born about 1216, and dying in 1293, on the eve of the thirteen hundreds.

MARGARITONE

1216 – 1293

Magaritone, painter, sculptor, and architect, shows in his *Madonna and Child, with scenes from the Lives of the Saints*, no hint of the new spirit of the coming art of the Renaissance. The Virgin is a swarthy Roman-Greek, the Child-Christ a manikin—all is formal convention—the infant, like all else, must not commit the sin of being like nature. The decoration is a pattern-like scheme—the Virgin and Child in an almond-shape, with four small pictures on each side, as though taken from a Byzantine "miniature"; over all is the manner of Byzantium, or, as

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MARGARITONE

1216? – 1293

TUSCAN SCHOOL

"THE VIRGIN AND CHILD, WITH SCENES FROM THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS"

(NATIONAL GALLERY)

In the centre is seated the Virgin holding before her on her lap the Christ, who blesses in the Greek manner. The Virgin is placed in a mandorla. On either side are:

1. The Nativity.
2. St. John the Evangelist liberated by Angels from the caldron of boiling oil.
3. The Martyrdom of St. Catherine and her Burial on Mount Sinai.
4. St. Nicholas exhorting the Sailors to throw overboard a vase of oil given to them by the Devil.
5. St. John raising Drusiana.
6. St. Benedict, haunted by the recollection of a beautiful woman he had seen in Rome, plunging himself into a thicket of briars and nettles to mortify the flesh.
7. St. Nicholas preventing the execution of three innocent men.
8. St. Margaret swallowed and disgorged again by the Dragon, unhurt.

The picture bears the signature, in Latin, of the artist: "Margaritone of Arezzo made me."

Painted in tempera on linen affixed to wood. 2 ft. 9 in. h. × 5 ft. 9 in. w. (0·839 × 1·753).

the Italians called it, *Alla Greca*. The thing is scarce a work of art at all, but rather sumptuous craftsmanship— the artist essays to state little that he has sensed through his own vision. Yet Margaritone was one of the most distinguished of Tuscan painters of his age, and one of the earliest painters of Italy.

CIMABUE

1240? – 1302

Of a generation later than Margaritone, but working within Margaritone's years, in Florence hard by to the south-west, was Giovanni Cenni de' Pepi, more famous as CIMABUE. Born about 1240, and dying in 1302, Cimabue was for long acclaimed 'the father of modern painting'; and a famous altar-piece, said to have been painted by this Florentine, and known as the *Rucellai Madonna*, at S. Maria Novella in Florence, was long held to have been borne in procession through Florence amidst public rejoicing; but research has proved that, so far from this altar-piece being by Cimabue, it was painted by a painter of Siena, one Duccio, and that Cimabue worked in mosaic in the Byzantine manner, no painting by his brush being known. However that may be, Cimabue, alas, neither painted the *Rucellai Madonna* nor was it carried in public procession, as we shall see. The pretty story is due to the gossip of Vasari in later years, the Florentine historian of the lives of the Italian painters, who but filched another city's credit and another painter's glory to bring fame to his own Florence. The legend of Cimabue's altar-piece rests solely on the witness of Vasari, who filched the incident from the undoubted and fully recorded incident of the rival city of Siena. Yet it is with some regret that one parts from the pretty old legend of that *Rucellai Madonna*, set

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up amidst public rejoicing in the dark transept of S. Maria Novella, hard by the garden where the youths and maidens met on that Tuesday morning in the year of the Plague, sitting round about Boccaccio to hearken to tales that should keep their minds from the death that stalked the streets of the stricken city without. But the city's records contain no hint of the gift, or painting, or public procession; and the city's records are very full. No such important event could have passed by unrecorded.

Dante writes of Cimabue as a painter, 'tis true; but his phrase rather points to the fact that Cimabue's artistry was as purely Byzantine as that of Magaritone. "Cimabue," says Dante, "thought to hold the field in painting, but to-day Giotto is hailed by the public." A new art had arisen—Cimabue's style, once in the fashion, had departed—a new style had taken its place.

Cimabue, the last of the great Byzantine painters, seems, however, to have been the master of Giotto, the first great Florentine painter of the Renaissance; but the gulf between these two generations of master and pupil yawns wide indeed.

So far, the Byzantine painters had only seen flat—they only attempted to set figures on the flat surface of the wall as flat decorations, with height and breadth but *without depth*. The New Art, about to come into Italy, was to see the figure as a rounded thing—was to try and make the flat painted surface yield the illusion of *depth*, as of things seen in a flat mirror.

But even as Margaritone wrought in tempera, upon the linen fixed to a panel, his swarthy Roman-Greek Virgin with her Child, and signed upon it, "Margaritone of Arezzo made me," the fairy Prince of Gothic Art had stepped

across the Alps of the North, and, passing by him, kissed the Princess of Italian realism as she lay in her long sleep; and she awoke to find herself a new creature, a-thrill with a strange wonder, for the virtue of the North had gone out to her, and her blood tingled with the spirit of northern romance. For the feet of the Prince had trodden the green fields and woodlands of France; his apparel was fragrant of the fresh winds that blew across the face of the world; his eyes had seen the blue heavens and had mirrored the grey clouds, and gazed upon the hills and waters of the Rhine. In his ears was the music of the voices of men and women; and his arms had held children that were mere babes. He had walked amidst adventures, and to him the hot-house languor of the East was but a sultry weariness of days. He had faced life, and gloried in the pursuit of it. And he had seen that God's heaven was blue as lapis-lazuli, and that the miles of air were between, bathing the world in wondrous radiance and casting an indefinable glamour over all things; that the heavens were not made of cubes of gilt glass or stones set into rigid patterns, but were aerial, and filled with the living breath of nature. Thus, redolent of life, the North stooped and kissed Italy upon the mouth; and she arose, with a long-drawn sigh, and burst into song—and that song pedantic men call the Renaissance, that had better been called the Awakening.

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THE RENAISSANCE IN CENTRAL ITALY

CHAPTER I

OF THE CRADLE OF THE RENAISSANCE IN ITALY

THE DAWN OF MODERN PAINTING

In Italy, and in France on that side that lies hard by northern Italy, as well as in northern France, where she reaches to the flood of the Rhine, there began to dawn in the twelve hundreds a new meaning in life, a new revelation of the significance of life; and with the dawn was to be created what is somewhat foolishly called a re-birth, a Renaissance, of the arts—for the arts evolve, as all life evolves, and dead things are re-born never. There was at any rate a new-found intimacy with nature; men began to see life freshly; and there followed a marked outburst of artistry which sounded a new note.

In France the Gothic arts had developed a keen effort to express the reality of living things. The character of all Gothic art had been its direct inspiration from, and its affectionate intimacy with, nature. It had concerned itself with teaching; and Gothic architecture is covered with ornament intensely interested in all that was known and felt of nature. The mediæval church was the school of mediæval Europe.

As the mediæval years ran out, everywhere, on all sides, was a strange stirring in men's hearts—everywhere amongst the Gothic peoples was this sense of awakening—everywhere men were thinking and seeing and stating what they saw in a manner that the world had never before known. The Dark Ages were near spent. The nations were arising. The air was redolent of the coming of Spring.

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Now, as this Gothic interest in nature, in the joy of life, stole into Italy, and, like the Prince of Faery, stealthily making its way through the briery woods and thorn-entangled ways of scholasticism and Byzantinism, came to the sleeping Princess, and kissing Italy upon the mouth, awoke Italian realism from its long slumber, and set astir a new life in the land, it so chanced that there came to Italy soon thereafter, out of Greece, a sudden interest in the great dead past of antique Rome and ancient Hellas—a widespread searching into the Greek ideal of life that had insisted upon man as being the chiefest significance to man—a keen desire to learn, from the literature and history and arts of antique days, what had been the source of his glory and his greatness—that inquisitiveness into the ideals of the men of antique days which the philosophic folk call Humanism.

At once sprang up a taste for Greek and Roman literature and art; and architecture took on forms that were a tribute to Athens—the Renaissance architecture was born. The men of the Renaissance no doubt thought they were bringing Athens to Italy; but there was that in their blood which made an academic restoration impossible—they were working out a new growth of the soul of man, and were but disciplining Gothic art to Greek forms, creating the mixed and complex art of the Renaissance that had no real likeness to that of Athens, however much it aimed to imitate antique Greece.

Certain fine qualities the Italians caught from Greece—love of independence, a republican ideal of liberty. And just as Greece inspired these ideals, so also she put upon Italy that lack of nationality, the petty conception of the city's greatness above the unity of the race, which was to be the curse of Italy throughout the splendid years of her Renaissance; which was to split the land into warring

elements and petty states; which was at last to lose Italy her independence for hundreds of years. And, as with her life, so with her art—the Greek spirit was to set up a living ideal of humanism; to set up also a false ideal, the ideal of Beauty as the aim of Art, which was to hamper her complete expression, and eventually to fall like a blight upon her artistic endeavour—and to balk the endeavour of all lands that came under her after-influence. For nothing has balked the full utterance of the arts in the succeeding ages, and hampered their achievement so wantonly, as this Greek falsity that Art is Beauty.

OF THE CRADLE OF THE RENAISSANCE IN ITALY

Italy, then, since the fall of Rome, had been building the Italy of the Middle Ages, mediæval Italy, using her ancient Roman buildings for quarries wherefrom to take the stone for that building—just as her life had filched parts from the life of ancient Rome. Then, towards 1300, came the Gothic love of nature stealing across the Alps out of France and from the Rhine. For he who looks upon the art of Renaissance Italy feels at once that here is something pouring into his sense of vision that no other age had aforetime brought forth.

To realise the significance of Italian art, it is well also to remember that, at the close of the Middle Ages, the life beyond the death of the body—otherworldliness—the Day of Judgment, or rather, as the Middle Ages grimly put it, the Day of Wrath, "Dies Irae," filled the vision of the Italian. Dante's whole genius was founded upon it—his art thunders it. The theatres made Hell the subject of their dramas. Tortures and the agonies of burning cauldrons drew crowds to the pageant and the play! So you shall find the art of Florence, from beginning to end, steeped in the inquisitive survey of the emotions in the Day of Wrath;

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Michelangelo putting the crown to his and Italy's achievement in a vast *Day of Judgment*. The several circles of hell roused the painters to continued illustration. And the very Christ loomed to them as the Judge to whom even the Madonna kneels at the dread bar of Final Justice.

It was the monkish habit that upheld the ascetic over the worldly life—as though to discipline men's passions with the fear of death ever before their eyes. Thus, side by side, even whilst Boccaccio's tales and Petrarch's sonnets sound the blithe note of the coming era, the Italian genius is weighed down by the desolate nightmare that was the gift of the Middle Ages—Death busy with his sickle amongst young men and maids, rich and poor, with the wrath of God beyond and inevitable. Surely Boccaccio in the garden, beguiling the youths and damsels amidst the roses, while the plague roams outside the gates, bears something of the symbol of the Renaissance in Italy! It was a dramatic age—and the drama uttered itself in painting.

The grim and savage sternness of the Middle Ages burst through the gates of the dawn of the Renaissance, joined hands with Romance and antique Paganism, and ran riot through the Renaissance.

So, too, the Church. The Middle Ages left a heritage of two vast contending forces to the Renaissance. On the one hand the sweet bequest of Saint Francis of Assisi, beautiful and exquisite, gentle and tender, loving beast and flower and all created things, redolent of charity and mildness, generosity and love; on the other Saint Dominic, the remorseless foe of all heresies, the warlike and aggressive lord of dogma, "the holy athlete, gentle to his own, and to his foes cruel" of Dante's phrase—he who dealt out butcheries and burnings to save the soul of man. For

St. Francis, love; for St. Dominic, wrath—the old conflict of the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Gospels, the eternal problem. So the punning monks did call the Dominicans *Domini canes*—the black and white hounds hunting heretic wolves.

Again, it must be borne in mind that the Italians of the Renaissance expressed their genius, their hopes, their aims, their ambitions, their life, in terms of art—above all, in the art of painting. The Italian peoples, their habits, their manners, their everyday life, uttered themselves forth artistically. The land was ablaze with splendid ceremonial; magnificence paraded itself everywhere; the heads of the great families kept vast armies of retainers arrayed in fine armour and gorgeous liveries, their houses sumptuously built and decorated, their furniture elaborate; every article of domestic use aimed at the beautiful—cups, tankards, platters, door-handles, knockers, beds, coverlets, trunks, tables, everything. From the Pope upon St. Peter's chair to the clerk in the city, all played at the splendid pageant of life—each was picturesque. Wars were waged as a mighty pageant, with elaborate laws and formalities and etiquette—and marchings and countermarchings hither and thither, drums beating, banners flying, trumpets sounding.

CHAPTER II

THE RENAISSANCE DAWNS OVER CENTRAL ITALY

THE DAWN OF MODERN PAINTING

He who would grasp the significance of the Renaissance of the arts in Italy would do well first to set the shape of Italy in the mirror of his mind. As schoolboys have it, Italy lies like a long jack-boot upon the waters of the Mediterranean. The Alps, sweeping round the northern boundaries of Italy, curve down southwards to separate France from her; turn eastwards, skirting the edge of the Gulf of Genoa; then strike southwards to make the backbone of Italy as the Apennines, no longer hugging the shore, but running towards the heel of Italy athwart the land, then having near touched the eastern coast at the boot's ankle, they change their intention, and run down to the toe of the boot. This backbone of Italy divides the northern lowlands of Lombardy and Venice from the Tuscan lowlands of western mid-Italy; and to the cities of these two lowlands, north and south of the Apennines, came the wondrous blossoming and flowering of the arts of the Renaissance. Of a truth, this shaping of her surface not only influenced her arts, but largely affected her troublous and strenuous history, and shaped her destinies.

The history of Renaissance Italy is a very intricate affair, since it is the history of rival towns and rival families—not the history of a people. The art of the time has fallen into this complexity and become as a puzzle, largely due to the utterly false system of attributing to each town an art of its own. The art of Italy, as a matter of fact, is but the art of three great movements—the art of

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Venice in the north, and the art of Central Italy, which had its two homes, the one in Florence and the other alongside in Siena, which spread to neighbouring Umbria, making its home in Perugia. All other Italian art arose out of these three great centres—Venice, Florence, and Umbria.

Sometimes the issue is confused by talk of "the school of Milan," but this was simply, as we shall see, the school of Florence, taken thither by Leonardo da Vinci. And so with the others.

Another source of confusion is the idea that the art of the Renaissance arose in Italy out of Greece; that it flourished in Italy; then passed to the north and west. It did no such thing. The Renaissance began along the Rhine at the same time as in Italy. The Flemish and Italian Renaissance acted and counteracted the one on the other, and both had their roots not in Hellas but in the Middle Ages; both were essentially children of the Middle Ages, but both were affected in the schoolroom by the antique governess.

Unless this essential fact be grasped and held, no man shall understand the significance either of the Renaissance or of its artistic utterance.

What fairy godmother watched over Venice and Florence, over Siena and Perugia, who shall tell? We can but shrug the shoulder of surprise that Genoa, despite her wide sea-intercourse with the world, and situate near Carrara's famed marble quarries—that Rome, the centre of the age and the shrine of the art-student and the traveller —that Piedmont and Liguria, Naples and the South, remained wholly barren of the creators of art. Whilst Venice sang the glory of the world and the splendour of life in oil-painting, Florence gave forth in fresco the tragic intensity of life, founded on the grim and stern spirit of the

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prophets, felt with an almost Greek fatalism ; and pietistic Siena and Umbria, stirred by the gentle and gracious spirit of St. Francis from Assisi, hymned the religious fervour that comes from spiritual contemplation and the consolation of the Gospels.

To TUSCANY, then, it were well first to turn. Painting began as the servant of the Church—her sole theme the thought of the mediæval church. The painters, employing nature to give visual form to their art, became masters of natural forms; mere vague mystic dreams gave way to realism. The artist began early to find that there were far wider emotions than such as were aroused by worship; he speedily became secular. The rapid increase of the power of the great families soon saw the artists adorning the palaces. The classical revival and interest in antique thought that began to grip the imagination of men about the middle fourteen-hundreds, still further increased the secular aim of the painter. As the fourteen-hundreds ran out, politics and social life, to the very inmost sanctuaries of the great Church itself, rapidly lost religious fervour and the simple mediæval faith; the old sense of morality was loosened, and took on the more pagan ideals of the antique Greek ; and a humane paganism and State-Christianity went to their wedding. By the year 1500 the mightiest masters of the art of painting in the Renaissance wrought a splendid art, that proved the age to be neither wholly Christian nor wholly heathen, but learned and intensely human. Yet even as she uttered her supreme song, the end was near for Italy. She flung away her liberty in the false glamour of the splendour of her great families, who, under the forms of liberty, reduced her to slavery and filched her strength.

CHAPTER III

OF THE ITALY INTO WHICH THE RENAISSANCE CAME

OF THE ITALY INTO WHICH THE RENAISSANCE CAME

Out of the vast confusion and tangle of the end of the Middle Ages rises this Renaissance—an era not over easy exactly to define. If by the Middle Ages we mean the period which follows the breaking up of the Roman Empire by the invasion of the Germanic barbarian hordes from the north, and the forming, out of these barbarian peoples, of the great nationalities that we now call Europe, then let us grasp the main ideas which constitute mediævalism. First of all, the modern nations—the French, English, Spanish, and the like—only became conscious of their unity at the end of the Middle Ages. Christendom in the Middle Ages was a single state under two great heads, the Pope and the Emperor. And Christendom was in practice a huge Feudal system, founded on the tenure of the land and on military service, whereby each class had rights and duties to the other—industry had small place in it—and the code of conduct consisted in the fantastic and romantic rules and customs called Chivalry. This Chivalry was as universal as Christianity, and so little national was it, that a French or Italian knight were more akin, and had more in common, than they had with the citizen or peasant of their own land. Then, the individual was not the social unit, which was rather a corporation, either of the manor, or the municipal body, or the guild—the individual had no outlet for his activities outside these. Then, it was an age of ignorance.

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The clergy alone were learned, and that learning was severely restricted as to what it uttered forth. Not that the clergy withheld education; printing was unknown; and the small literature produced was written in Latin on parchments. The learned themselves were therefore grossly given up to superstition.

The Renaissance saw the whole fabric of the Middle Ages come to an end—it set a file to cut the fetters from liberty of thought and liberty of inquiry. It dawned in the twelve-hundreds, and shed its light over the thirteen-hundreds and fourteen-hundreds, and reached its fulness in the fifteen-hundreds in the wide upheaval of a vast religious struggle. It saw the decay of the Empire and of the Papacy—and with them went the whole tradition, laws, and habits of the Middle Ages. It saw the growth of nationalities. It witnessed the rise of national literatures and national churches. It beheld the rise of industry breaking up feudalism and chivalry, and the assailing of aristocratic and ecclesiastical power by the people. It was racked by the fierce wars of monarchies which founded themselves upon the support of the people, even if, except in England, the monarchs kicked away that support as soon as they had established their power. It was an age of inventions and discoveries—the compass and the astrolabe led the sea-dogs to mighty adventure upon the great waters, so that the keels thrashed out a new water-way to India, and man's daring found a new world across the terrors of the Atlantic, thereby changing the trade-routes of the universe. The discovery of gunpowder blew not only the picturesque armour to pieces but upset the whole art of war, and overthrew the whole system on which feudalism was built—changing the whole form of society, that had heretofore been founded on military service. Printing spread literature

OF THE ITALY INTO WHICH THE RENAISSANCE CAME

and knowledge across the land. Copernicus overthrew the whole belief in the position of the earth, and brought down the vast structure of superstition with a crash. And mighty as was the upheaval, its chief source of inspiration was in its revival of letters and the utterance of its awakening energies in the so-called re-birth of Art.

The recovery of ancient literature fired the ambition of man, arising from the long sleep of the Middle Ages, to desire for individual liberty. Man began to look upon himself as man—Humanism became a god. He read his new needs in the achievements of republican Rome and ancient Greece. Italy, by her position in the waters of the Mediterranean, became the mart of commerce. Her citizens grew to prodigious wealth. And, what is far too much overlooked, she received from the East, through Arabia and Persia, the vast teachings of the great Eastern thought.

The Church, having its seat in their very midst, by very contact with the Italian peoples, had not the dread terror for them that its commands and threats held for more distant peoples. No man is a hero to his own valet. The thunders that frightened the Emperor Lewis of Bavaria into submission had no terrors for an Italian prince. The legates that bore the papal bull of excommunication to Bernabo Visconti had to eat the parchment and swallow the leaden seal! But the Pontiffs, so far from checking the new learning and the antique thought, encouraged it and gloried in it. On the other hand, the same familiarity with the Papacy which prevented the Italians from being overawed by the Papal fulminations made them so used to the abuses of the Papal court which set in, that they were not scandalised by them, and took no part in flinging off the yoke, as did the northern peoples. The Popes, also, had added temporal

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splendour to their spiritual supremacy, and vied with the great Italian princes in the splendour of their courts and churches and palaces. They became eager patrons of the Renaissance, thereby, unwitting of it, adding force to the movement that was to overthrow the wide authority of Rome over Christendom—just as the nobles of France were, later, to play with philosophy that had popular rights and liberty for its very essence, and, together with the French monarchy, aided the revolt of Britain's American colonists, thereby creating the French Revolution.

Dante stands in the twilight of the Middle Ages, uttering the first new *national* literature. Dante was essentially of the Middle Ages; he clung to its faith and its ideals. But by his example he almost set foot on the threshold of the new era. Petrarch, following after, sets the fashion of the sonnet, and his song is passionate with the antique love of liberty and the significance of man as man, which makes him the first of the so-called Humanists. But there wrought side by side with Petrarch a far more significant genius in letters, Boccaccio of the immortal tales of the *Decameron*. From that garden where the youths and maidens sat and listened to him, whilst he turned their thoughts from the Black Plague that raged through the city, Boccaccio brought the spirit of antique Greece into Italy, and from Italy it spread across the face of the world—for he uttered there a contempt of superstition and a joy of life that meant death to the sombre spirit of the Middle Ages. In far England Chaucer caught the refrain, and brought to birth the *Canterbury Tales*. Thus the fashion for the ancient literature and works of art grew into a vogue; and it so chanced that a worthy and somewhat ambitious usurer and banker of Florence, of a house to grow famous as the de' Medici, gathered the learned and the poets and painters and archi-

tects and sculptors about him, and made the City of the Lilies to blossom with the supreme art of the Italian Renaissance, so that her fame lives throughout the ages.

OF THE ITALY INTO WHICH THE RENAISSANCE CAME

The early fourteen-hundreds saw the collections of works of antique literature and art pouring into the land; the end of the fourteen-hundreds saw men reading and studying them, and forthwith they got to interpreting them and applying them to the problems of their own age. Italy and the world beyond Italy broke asunder. Italy was filled with destructive criticism. Lorenzo Valla attacked the title-deeds of the Popes to worldly power, and the whole church system. Destructive criticism led to the denials of pure negation—and, as ever with mere denial, licence and lack of ideals arose in the land. Beyond Italy, the love of Freedom led to constructive ideals, and created the Reformation. But both the leaders of the Reformation in the north, and the leaders of the chaos in Italy, once established, grew alarmed for themselves, and hurriedly turned against the very spirit of liberty that had created them; they steeped themselves in a bitter and black Puritanism. Protestantism became extreme, and turned to a Puritanism bitterly opposed to Humanism. Savonarola, the guiding spirit of Catholic Puritanism, as fiercely assailed Humanism. So Florence saw that fantastic festival when the youths and maidens of the city brought out their pictures and jewels and personal decorations, their precious books, and priceless works of art, and flung them into the public bonfires; just as the English and Dutch Puritans denounced art as the mere love of beauty and carnal pleasure, and, though they had founded their faith in freedom of thought and of soul and of worship, were soon raising as cast-iron a dogma and setting up a State-church as violently intolerant as that against which they had revolted themselves, to become as bitter persecutors

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as their persecutors. But, spite of this reaction, the Renaissance had added a forward step to man's empire of liberty of mind, of act, of body and of soul. The school arose in every city, whereby became wedded the discipline of the free mind and the conscience of the individual man.

CHAPTER IV

OF THE ITALY IN WHICH THE RENAISSANCE BLOSSOMED

In the year 962 after Christ, the Roman Empire had become one with the German crown. It thereby destroyed both realms of its sovereignty. The universal authority of the Emperor became shadowy, and swiftly passed into unreality. The Empire was torn into shreds amidst that tangle of warring princes who created the puzzled nightmare of history called the Middle Ages.

The other great centre of mediæval power, the Papacy, also declined, even whilst it increased in worldly splendour, losing its world-power by being localised in a little state in Central Italy. Claiming certain lands in Central Italy by virtue of real or pretended donations from the Emperors and others, the Popes made the fatal mistake, backed by the house of Anjou that sat upon the throne of Naples to the south, to temporal dominion over the Romagna, the Pentapolis, the March of Ancona, with the city of Rome and the Campagna. In doing so, they became lords of a little kingdom instead of lords of Christendom. Their alliance with the house of Anjou soon became a masked servitude to the patronage of that house. The troubles of temporal rule plunged the Popes into secular affairs, to the loss of their spiritual power. The Popes were always old men, and their tenure of office was brief. Not only did secular affairs take their interest from high spiritual affairs, but it lowered them in the eyes of Europe. Thus, they

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became associated with the mere lordship of a petty Italian state, and their great position was wholly degraded by it, exactly as the Empire was degraded the moment it became a mere German monarchy. I am now using the term "degraded" as meaning degradation of power. We shall see how the Pontiffs, in proportion as they became little kings of Central Italy, also became degraded in ethics during the Renaissance.

This loss of a great central power by the retirement of the Emperor to a little German court, and by the ambition of the Popes to found a little Central Italian kingdom, broke Italy into a large number of warring states, out of which emerged Naples to the south, with the house of Anjou as its sovereign; the duchy of Milan in Lombardy to the north, with its dominant family of the Visconti; the republic of Florence, with its dominant family of the merchant princes of the Medici; the great Republic of Venice, and the lesser Republic of Genoa; and the domination of lesser states by great families, such as the House of Este in Ferrara, the della Scala in Verona, the Gonzaga in Mantua, the Montefeltri in Urbino, with all their constant broils and everlasting quarrels.

And by no means the least fantastic paradox of the Renaissance in Italy, which was one vast paradox, is the pathetic fact that whilst Italy created the art of writing history again with reasoned grip of the action and counter-action of policies, whilst she taught all Europe the science of politics, as well as the arts of letters and painting, whilst she rid human thought of superstition and scholasticism, she was herself wholly unable to benefit from the lessons that she taught. France, England, and Spain were born out of the nationalism she taught, and became strong; whilst Italy remained a chaos—the cockpit of the wars.

OF THE ITALY IN WHICH THE RENAISSANCE BLOSSOMED

The causes were many. The long quarrels between Pope and Emperor had split Italy into the party feuds of Guelf and Ghibelline. These feuds became hereditary. A more deadly cause of disunion was the fact of the city being the unit of political life. For when a great city brought others into its realm, the lesser cities did not become a part of, or share the equal rights of, the dominant commune—they became essentially a conquered people, not fellow-citizens. Thus the Italians, a proud people, proud of liberty, became a hotbed of discontent, eagerly flocked to the standard of the soldier-adventurers, called *condottieri*, who raised mercenary armies for the services of such princes or republics as offered the highest wage; and it was exactly this population which eagerly welcomed all foreign invasion as a means of escape from domestic tyranny—thus the sense of nationality simply was not.

The house of Anjou, lords of NAPLES, the head of the Guelfs, looked like dominating Italy, when, in Sicily, the brutal insult to a woman by a French soldier during the procession of Easter Monday, on the 30th of March 1282, provoked a sudden rising at Palermo, and the people, with shouts of "Death to the French!" massacred over four thousand men, women, and children that evening in the terrible tragedy known as the Sicilian Vespers, which lost Sicily to the House of Anjou.

So far for the kingdom of Naples to the south. The PAPAL STATES need not detain us long. With the departure of the Popes to Avignon, and the seventy years of their so-called "Babylonish Captivity," we are not here concerned. It is enough to realise that the Popes, now being petty potentates of Central Italy, and hereditary succession to their lordship being impossible owing to their vow of celibacy, the vice of nepotism became rife, and the Popes,

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being old men on election, had to make the most of a short tenure of power for the aggrandisement of their families. Nicolas III. (1277-1280) increased the power of his great House of the Orsini; Honorius IV. (1285-1287) exalted his family, the Savelli, at the cost of the Orsini; Nicolas IV. (1288-1292) raised the Colonna. The thirteen-hundreds saw Rome torn with the bitter feuds of these great baronial houses; the effect on the spiritual and temporal dignity of the Popes was wholly disastrous. The Conclave of Cardinals henceforth became the cockpit of their intrigues. The Popes, in their quarrels with the Emperors, had nursed the growth of nationalities in the north-west, only thereby to forge the deadliest weapons against their successors. Boniface VIII. (1294-1303), the ablest pontiff of his times, unable to see the overwhelming force that was being born in nationalisation, found himself treated with contempt by Edward I. of England, backed by his Parliament—and by Philip IV. of France, backed by his States-General. The French king seized the Pope, whose humiliation broke his pride in death. Then began the withdrawal of the Popes from Rome, which ended in the exile of seventy years to Avignon, and their subjection to French policy.

TUSCANY, lying to the north-west of the Papal States, was a group of city-states, mostly republics, subject to despots. Of these by far the greatest was FLORENCE, destined to become queen of all Tuscany. To the south was SIENA. The great port of PISA was declining, owing to her defeat by Genoa in 1284. LUCCA showed plucky resistance from time to time to the tyranny of Florence.

FLORENCE was to become the hub of Central Italy's great achievement in art and letters in the Renaissance, her only rival the great republic of Venice in the north. No city

had suffered more from the wrangles of Guelf and Ghibelline; and in Florence their bitterness and hatred was increased by the fact that they tallied with class hatred. The feudal nobles were Ghibelline; the merchant princes Guelf, siding therefore with the Popes. On the defeat of Manfred in 1266, Florence became Guelf for the rest of her career. The Guelf sway, at first moderate and pacific, was changed by the news of the Sicilian Vespers of 1282—the Guelfs taking alarm and changing the constitution, out of which arose four orders in Florence—(1) the nobles, (2) the seven greater guilds, (3) the fourteen lesser guilds, and (4) the ordinary citizens, who were without machinery for self-government or influence on public affairs. The nobles could come to office by joining a guild; but had to practise the trade or craft—otherwise they were shut out of office, and suffered many humiliations. The head officer of the state, called gonfalonier, was elected by the signory of the guilds, was in command of a large force of infantry, and was elected for two months. The harshest penalty therefore was to ennoble a citizen; the greatest honour to a noble was to degrade him to citizen. The signory were given a fortified Public Palace.

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Though the actual conduct of affairs was in the hands of a plutocracy, real power was with all the citizens in mass meeting in the great piazza called a *parlamento*.

The disastrous war of 1321 with Lucca showed the weaknesses of a two-months government; and a system of secret ballots was soon created, and the *squittino*, or scrutiny every two years, was applied. A list of all citizens qualified for office was drawn up; their names put to the ballot by the committee of the signory for the time being, the black and white beans fell, and such names as received two-thirds black beans were put in the bags from which vacancies

were filled as they arose. It followed that the committee of signory in power largely controlled the names in the bags. By 1323, then, Florence was governed by a gonfalonier of justice, six priors, and twelve *buonuomini*, who were the privy council to the signory. But it was complicated by a series of subordinate magistracy who greatly confused all issues.

GENOA played but a small part in the Renaissance, taken up with its incessant family feuds of the Doria and Spinola, and chiefly concerned in creating its vast sea-borne wealth by eastern trading.

MILAN, fast losing its republican independence, was racked with class feuds and cross-racked with family feuds. In 1259 the Guelfs, under their great leader, Martino della Torre, overthrew the Ghibelline nobles, and became lord of the great Lombard city, bringing Lodi, Como, Vercelli, and Bergamo into subjection to him. But the Ghibelline revolution of 1277, under the Archbishop Otto Visconti, set Visconti in the seat of lordship; from him it passed, on his death, to his nephew Matteo Visconti, founder of the Visconti dynasty of Dukes of Milan, which, however, was not yet to be, the Guelfs first, for a short while, restoring their line, bringing Guido della Torre to rule in Milan.

The fortunes of VENICE we will follow later, in her great art achievement—such worlds apart from that of Florence.

So for some sixty years the affairs of Italy had drifted towards the rule of local despots, when the Emperor, Henry VII., decided on his hopeless scheme of restoring the empire throughout Italy. He but clutched at a shadow. His policy of moderation was carried out. As he passed through the cities of Lombardy, he recalled all

exiles of whatever party. On receiving the Iron Crown of Lombardy at Milan, on the 6th of January 1311, he recalled Matteo Visconti without setting aside Guido della Torre. But his moderation fell upon stony ground in Italy. Milan rose against his levy for money; it ended in disaster, and Guido della Torre and his house were driven into exile, the Guelfs were put down with a stern hand, and Matteo Visconti was again established as lord of Milan, thus creating the dynasty of the Visconti, which ruled Milan for a century and a half.

OF THE ITALY IN WHICH THE RENAISSANCE BLOSSOMED

Thenceforth the dream of Henry VII. vanished into smoke. On his southward journey the Guelf city of Florence refused to admit him or his troops, and he had to pass aside on his wayfaring to Rome. Finding Rome in possession of the Guelf Orsini, and seeing that a battle must be fought before he could be crowned in St. Peter's, he was crowned instead at St. John Lateran, on the 29th of June 1312. Convinced now that Italy could only be reduced by war, his line of communication with Germany threatened by the Guelfs in the north, Henry decided to strike at the Guelf cause in Florence. But he arrived before the city's walls in the September of 1312, to find them too strong. He withdrew to Pisa to await reinforcements, as the king of Naples was advancing to the support of Florence. He had commenced his march to attack the Neapolitan army when he died suddenly of fever at Buonconvento, twelve miles from Siena, on August 24, 1313, supposed to have been poisoned by a Dominican monk in giving him the sacrament. So vanished the Emperor's and Dante's dream of the Holy Roman Empire. For several years the Popes had departed to the banks of the Rhone. Italy, freed from her two great masters, fell apart, and the thirteen-hundreds show the rise of the

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despots—the lesser states fell under the dominion of their more powerful neighbours, and thus arose the five great powers whose fierce motives create the story of the century. The later invasions from the north, first of Lewis of Bavaria and then of John of Bohemia, with their German legions, to establish the empire, equally failed.

The despot Visconti in Milan, and Della Scala in Verona, overthrew republican independence in the cities of Lombardy. The Papal States were governed by legates of the Popes, though these were constantly assailed by Ghibelline despots in the several cities.

Florence remained republican. It must be remembered that to an Italian patriotism meant nothing. A Florentine was a Florentine only. Outside that, Italy meant nothing to him. A man of Milan or Venice was as much a foreigner to him as was a Frenchman. He had no sense of shame in calling in the French to assist him against another Italian city.

The humiliating defeat of Florence by Pisa in 1341, and the loss of Lucca, made the citizens in an evil moment call in the foreigner Walter de Brienne, Duke of Athens, as dictator. But ten months of despotism roused the liberty-loving Florentines. The fall of the Duke of Athens led to the further democratisation of Florence.

Unfortunately, the martial vigour that overthrew the Duke of Florence was not common in Italy, and was soon also to pass from Florence herself. The thirteen-hundreds saw a change come over the military training of Italy, which was to be disastrous to her liberties. During the two centuries just past, the whole of the male population had been trained as a militia. It was a citizen army, and was the finest security for political liberty. Directly the despots arose, their first concern was to disarm the citizen,

and to hire alien troops who had no sympathy with the people whatsoever. The invasions of Henry VII., Lewis of Bavaria, and John of Bohemia had left a horde of German adventurers behind, willing to take Italian wage; and these men passed into the bodyguards of the despots. The republics found themselves compelled to do the same, as their citizen infantry were no match for these heavily armed cavalry. Wars were become elaborate affairs—the short sharp city fight was gone, and citizens could not afford the time for campaigning. The Florentines followed the fashion. Thus, until gunpowder came to blow the business to pieces, great hired armies of heavy cavalry became the fashion. The leaders of these mercenaries soon became conscious of the power that they held; they created armies and lived upon the unwarlike states, reaching to wealth and power by hiring their services to the highest bidder. One of the most picturesque of these warriors who poured into Italy to the great looting was the famous Englishman, John Hawkwood, whom the Florentines called Giovanni Acuto, and who, with his White Company, was famed for his high honour and good faith, to which the Florentines bore handsome witness by giving him a tomb and monument in the *Duomo*.

OF THE ITALY IN WHICH THE RENAISSANCE BLOSSOMED

The later thirteen-hundreds saw the Italians themselves taking to the game of *condottieri*. Thus in 1379 was formed the famous company of St. George by Alberigo da Barbiano, a noble of Romagno, to which only Italians were admitted, and which produced Braccio and Sforza, the two great Italian commanders of the fourteen-hundreds.

The thirteen-hundreds beheld Florence rent with continual strife of class against class, and family against family, for power. The expulsion of the Duke of Athens saw

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the Ghibelline nobles of Florence deprived of all power, which passed to the two orders of the Greater and the Lesser guilds. The Greater guilds decided to seize power by stealth. By the law of 1301, any person accused of being a Ghibelline was not to hold office. To carry this out, the Ostracism was created in Florence, whereby a charge brought against any man, supported by six witnesses, compelled the priors to strike the name of the accused from public service. The wealthy burgess class of the greater guilds forthwith systematically struck off the names of all men of the lesser guilds who came up for office. But the plutocrats had no sooner won to power than the family feud of the Albizzi and the Ricci broke out. The Albizzi got the whip hand of the Ricci by applying the "admonition" of Ghibellinism against them; until, by 1378, the rejected had grown into so strong a party that they were becoming dangerous. The Albizzi had become reckless. In May, Salvestro de' Medici, of the Ricci faction, was drawn as gonfalonier; but retired on the outburst of a revolt of the people, headed by the Ricci; the mob swept all before it, under the leadership of the noble-hearted and great-souled Michel Lando, a poor woolcomber of the people, who was made gonfalonier, restored order, extended democracy, and having proved himself a statesman, modestly retired from office. A violent reaction in 1382, however, undid all the good, and brought the Albizzi back to power.

From 1382, for fifty years, Florence came under the power of an ever-narrowing oligarchy. Under the resolute guidance of this oligarchy, however, Florence heroically fought Gian Galeazzo Visconti of Milan, and saved the city. She added to her dominions.

OF THE ITALY IN WHICH THE RENAISSANCE BLOSSOMED

The vital essence of the Florentine's life was his love of liberty. A large body of the rejected merchants, together with the whole people, bitterly resented the plutocratic manipulation of the government by lot under the Albizzi. The burden of taxation fell terribly upon the people—as it always does upon the governed. The cause of the people grew to be associated with the family of the Medici. In the fourteen-hundred-and-twenties, Giovanni de' Medici, a money-changer and rich banker, was grown to be regarded as the leader of the popular party. He was the richest man in Florence. He bought popularity with astute caution. He died in 1429, leaving two sons, Cosimo and Lorenzo.

The defeat of the Florentines under Malatesta at Zagonara in 1424, shook the Albizzi influence. Rinaldo degli Albizzi's disastrous and unjust attack on Lucca failed, and further discredited the plutocrats. Cosimo de' Medici boldly came forward as his rival. In the September of 1432, Rinaldo determined on violence, seized Cosimo de' Medici, and tried him for his life. The Medici moneys bought the magistracy; he was exiled for ten years to Padua, and Lorenzo for five years to Venice. But Rinaldo alienated the plutocrats by fearing to abolish the Medicean income-tax of a seventh of all incomes, which hit the rich as much as the poor. His disastrous defeats in war brought about a rising of the people; the Medici were recalled; and Rinaldo and his son and about seventy partisans were banished—few ever saw Florence again.

COSIMO DE' MEDICI

Cosimo de' Medici entered Florence on the 6th of October 1434; and from that day the history of the city, for three hundred years, is the history of the Medici.

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Cosimo de' Medici was a man of infinite craft. He slowly and stealthily acquired supreme power, by every outward show of democracy. All outward pride of despotism he carefully avoided. He lived in his old residence, nor put on richer apparel nor employed more sumptuous forms of living. He won powerful families to his personal service. His policy was a calculated scheme of proscription, but he saw to it that all harsh proposals came not from him but from his followers. He hounded the Albizzi like vermin. He used the taxes, as assassins use the knife, to destroy his enemies. He saw through the conceit of Luca Pitti, employed him to overthrow the liberty of the people, knowing that his elation at the act would ruin him. By the grim irony of events, Pitti built his famous palace on the hill of San Giorgio, south of the Arno, which was to become the home of the Grand Dukes of Tuscany! He set aside the ancient enmity of Milan by financing Francesco Sforza, who thus came to the lordship of Milan in 1450.

PIERO DE' MEDICI

Cosimo de' Medici's death in 1464 left his only surviving son, Piero, in power. Piero was middle-aged and in feeble health; and his five years of rule saw the split in the Medicean party, whereby Pitti, Veroni, Acciaiuoli, and Soderini withdrew from Piero's support. From Pitti's huge palace this party was nicknamed the *Mountain*, the Medici party the *Plain*. But Piero's son, Lorenzo de' Medici, was early to prove his capacity. Saving his father from an ugly ambush, the opposing party were overthrown by astute statecraft, and 1468 saw the Medici established in possession of Florence. On the death of Piero de' Medici, on the 3rd of December 1469,

Lorenzo de' Medici, his son, only in his twenty-first year, was acclaimed fit to exercise the power of his father and grandfather; and, after a becoming show of modesty, accepted the burden. He was now as much Duke of Florence as though he bore the title.

LORENZO DE' MEDICI

Lorenzo boldly assumed the bearing of a prince, married into the princely Roman family of the Orsini, and established a magnificent court. He became a patron of art and letters. He foolishly broke with the tradition of his house, and made overtures to his ancient enemy, Venice; the which alienated his old ally, the king of Naples. His rapid seizure of offices of state aroused the rivalry of the noble house of the Pazzi. In 1478 a conspiracy was headed by Jacopo Pazzi, and secretly supported by Pope Sixtus IV. and the king of Naples, whereby Lorenzo de' Medici and his brother Giuliano de' Medici, beloved of the people, were to be assassinated. Mercenaries were hired, headed by Giovanni Battista da Montesecco, to slay the brothers and seize the magistracy. It was essential to kill both brothers. At last the chance came on Sunday the 26th of April 1478, when, both brothers being present in the cathedral, the elevation of the Host was made the signal to strike. Montesecco refused to commit sacrilege by shedding blood in a church; and two priests took his place. They had not the skill. At the tinkling of the altar-bell, Giuliano was struck down, Francesco Pazzi dealing the death-blow. But Lorenzo, wounded in the shoulder, escaping in the scuffle, reached the sacristy, where his followers slammed the bronze doors in the face of the murderers. Archbishop Salviati, who had gone to the Palazzo to direct the seizure of the magistrates, showed such eagerness that he was

suspected and bound, with his followers. Vengeance was swift and terrible. Jacopo Pazzi, rushing into the street, led a procession shouting "Liberty!"; but the people turned on and seized the leaders and hustled them to the palace. News arriving that Giuliano was dead, ropes were put about the necks of Francesco Pazzi, the Archbishop of Pisa, and the other prisoners, and they were hanged forthwith from the windows. The family of the Pazzi, except Guglielmo, who had married Lorenzo's sister, were blotted out. The two priests were dragged forth from the sanctuary of a monastery to which they had fled, and were barbarously murdered by the mob. Montesecco, who had hurried from Florence, was overtaken, and after giving evidence of the Pope's complicity, was executed. Not one of the murderers escaped. One who had fled to Constantinople was tracked by a spy, brought back, and publicly executed.

The dastardly affair established Lorenzo in the hearts of the people. But Rome and Naples hurled their vast resources against him and Florence. In spite of a splendid resistance, Florence lay at the mercy of the investing troops, when Lorenzo decided on an heroic act. In the December of 1479, he determined to save the city that had fallen upon evil days for his sake. He set out for Naples, to make his peace with Ferdinand, the king, hoping to show that he repented of his Venetian folly. He was completely successful.

Thence, Lorenzo never looked back. He became for twelve years the first statesman in Italy.

In 1492 Lorenzo de' Medici died. It was the year of the discovery of America; the year of the conquest of Granada; the year that Alexander VI. was elected Pope of Rome—one of the most momentous years in the history of the world.

OF PAINTING

THE FOLLIES OF THE SECOND PIERO DE' MEDICI

OF THE ITALY IN WHICH THE RENAISSANCE BLOSSOMED

The fate of all Italy hung in the balance.

And there succeeded to Lorenzo the Magnificent his vulgar, foolish, and brutish son, Piero de' Medici. The despotism of the Medici rested on statecraft alone—no armies backed their authority. Piero was dowered by every gift of folly to ruin his house; and he did his best. Swaggering as prince, arrogantly disdainful of citizenship, he played the prince with a rattle. An Orsini by his mother, and mated to an Orsini, he became the tool of Naples, thereby alienating Ludovico Sforza of Milan, and driving Sforza into his desperate appeal to France which brought Charles VIII. and his Frenchmen swarming into Lombardy.

At the coming of the French, our second Piero proved a cur; his flight from Florence brought back a few troublous years of republicanism to the city, before she relapsed again under the sway of the Medici.

THE PAINTERS OF CENTRAL ITALY

SCHOOL OF SIENA

DUCCIO
Before 1255? – 1319

SIMONE MARTINI
1283 – 1344

- The *Lorenzetti*
- *Zippo Memmi* d. 1357

TADDEO DI BARTOLO
1362? – 1422

- *Lorenzo Vecchietta* 1412–1480
  - *Neroccio da Landi* 1447–1500
  - *Benvenuto da Giovanni* 1436?–1519
  - *Francesco di Giorgio* 1439–1502
- *Domenico di Bartolo* 1400 – 1449
- *Matteo da Siena* 1435 – 1495

BERNARDINO FUNGAI
1460–1516

- *Girolamo del Pacchia* 1477–1535?
- Pacchieretto 1474–1540

BAZZI arrives in Siena

- *Baldassare Peruzzi* 1481–1537
- Domenico Beccafumi 1485–1551

CHAPTER V

WHEREIN WE SEE THE RENAISSANCE FLIT THROUGH SIENA

WHEREIN WE SEE THE RENAISSANCE FLIT THROUGH SIENA

LEGEND long gave to Florence the first Italian painter of genius. Some Byzantine painters, so 'twas vowed, had been called to Florence about 1260, and set aflame the genius of CIMABUE, who created the Italian art; and he, wandering amongst the hills about Florence, found a shepherd lad, GIOTTO, scratching the forms of sheep upon a rock, and straightway brought him to his house and taught him the ways and craft and mysteries of an artist. Part of these pretty tales is fabled romance. Cimabue was a worker in mosaic, working in the manner of the Byzantines to make pictures by setting small cubes of coloured stones together into a mortared surface of walls and pavements. And if, as Dante bears witness, he painted pictures, none have come down to us. At any rate, if they exist, the *Rucellai Madonna* is not one of them.

THE SCHOOL OF SIENA

Early Sienese painting brought forth the first Italian genius. 'Tis true, the first real painter of genius in Florence was GIOTTO; but he was not the first genius of painting in Italy. We must go a little farther back, if not greatly farther afield, to neighbouring Siena, the southern rival city to Florence; and seek in Siena for Italy's beginnings in the art of painting and for her first genius in Duccio. For, whilst Duccio's feet are still

firm set on Byzantine ground, his head is raised into the Renaissance.

DUCCIO
1255?-1319

It will be remembered that the famed altar-piece of the *Rucellai Madonna* at S. Maria Novella in Florence was said to have aroused the enthusiasm of the city, but so far from its being the work of Cimabue, it is undoubtedly the work of the Sienese painter, Duccio di Buoninsegna, of the next generation, and but some ten years older than Giotto. This work had a large influence on Florentine painting, and a very considerable influence on the art of the younger man Giotto.

Duccio di Buoninsegna, who lived from about 1255 to 1319, who at any rate was working from about 1280 to his death in 1319, not only was the first master of the Sienese school, but its supreme painter; and in age the "father of modern painting," since both in Florence as well as his native Siena his influence was very great. He had undoubtedly studied and been trained in the Byzantine tradition of painting. But, fettered as he was, by Byzantinism, he was the first Italian to create the picture as a whole, to make figures into pictorial groups—and he did these things with something of grandeur in style, and a certain breadth of handling as regards his use of line and draughtsmanship. Duccio, it may be said, was the first painter to step from the painted illuminations of the Dark Ages, and to employ painting to larger and fuller ends. He put from him the gilt Byzantine backgrounds, and painted in their place architecture and landscape. He made his figures human; and rid figure and apparel of their Byzantine rigidity.

Duccio's most famous work is the huge altar-piece,

SIMONE MARTINI

1283 1344

SIENESE SCHOOL

"CHRIST BEARING HIS CROSS"

(Jésus-Christ marchant au Calvaire)

(LOUVRE)

Christ, preceded by the executioner, soldiers, and two children, is bearing His Cross to Calvary. He is attended by a large crowd, in which may be recognised the Virgin Mary, in blue robes, supported by St. John; St. Mary Magdalene in red, with her long hair falling over her shoulders, raises her hands in grief.

Painted in tempera on panel. 10 in. × 4 in. (0·25 × 0·10).

WHEREIN WE SEE THE RENAISSANCE FLIT THROUGH SIENA.

the *Maestà*, painted on the panels of the reredos for the cathedral, to-day in the Opera del Duomo of Siena, which, being completed in 1311, was carried through the streets to be placed in the cathedral on the 9th of the June of that year in solemn procession, to the ringing of bells, the city making public holiday, all shops and offices closed, and the people turning out in gala dress. And it is likely enough that this event was stolen by Florentine Vasari to fix upon Florence the credit of the *Rucellai Madonna*, and, for the same reason, the Florentine probably filched the credit of Duccio, in order to put the picture upon his fellow-townsman Cimabue. It is at least strange that there is no record of so great an event in the Florentine chronicles of the day—no hint of so important an event amidst the archives that record far lesser things; still more strange that the procession is repeated detail by detail in Vasari's stolen story.

After Duccio, Siena brought forth several painters of consequence, of whom his two pupils, Simone Martini, Segna di Buonaventura, the Lorenzetti, and Taddeo di Bartolo are the most famous.

Simone Martini, born at Siena in 1283, and dying at Avignon in 1344, is best known by his *Maestà* fresco in the Council Room of the Communal Palace of Siena, and by the equestrian portrait of *Guidoriccio da Fogliano*. We know from Petrarch that he painted Laura. His fame was wide in his day; and Siena, Pisa, Assisi, Orvieto, Naples, and Avignon hold his work.

Simone Martini was long confused with his wife's brother Lippo Memmi (dying about 1357), his follower and assistant, who was also the pupil of Duccio.

Of the two brothers, Pietro and Ambrogio Lorenzetti,

THE PAINTERS OF CENTRAL ITALY

the last of the Sienese painters of its golden early period, little is known—when they were born or when died—and the influence of Florence is strong upon their artistry. Both wrought their art in Pisa as well as in Florence and Siena. The elder brother Pietro's name is first known in 1335; he painted many frescoes, but most have vanished, except in the lower church of S. Francesco at Assisi. Several easel pictures remain. The younger brother, Ambrogio, comes down to us with his masterpiece of the allegorical frescoes of *Good and Bad Government* in the Hall of Peace at the Palazzo Pubblico of Siena, begun in 1337, and completed a couple of years after.

Of TADDEO DI BARTOLO (about 1362 to 1422) his most famed painting is the fresco of the *Apostles visiting the Virgin* in the church of S. Francesco at Pisa, remarkable for its poetic conception of loving adoration, and its movement of floating figures.

There is something astounding—if aught can astound in Italy of the Renaissance—that Siena, notorious for its vanity, its constant family brawls, its delicate living, should have uttered through its art a passionate piety, a constant religious fervour, were it not that the people were impressionable, highly emotional, quickly roused to passion whether of hate or love, whether fierce pietistic ardour or factional violence.

Siena was to be a bitter rival to Florence; but to fade away before the rapidly increasing greatness of that city. And as with the beautiful old city, so with her workers, who never came to the same splendour as the genius of Florence. But though they fell short of the power of the great Florentines, the rare poetic fervour of the works of genius that her sons brought forth outshines the achievement of Florence in tenderness, exquisiteness,

and passion—in a sense of elegance and a feeling for human beauty. They had the decorative vision and instinct for splendour. And sensitive art, founded on the habit of narrative illustration, which had grown out of the biblical habit of the mediæval church, was theirs always in abundance. But they never won to the Florentine grip on the human figure. They had always a feeling for colour that was alien to and lacking in Florence. Her sons essayed to utter the greater emotions without disciplining their hand's skill to the perfecting of their craftsmanship, and winning to command of form; and the school early fell into decay, more concerned with violence of feeling and sentimentality than with their power to utter their emotions, so that by 1400 the genius of Siena had shot its bolt, and had naught more to utter.

WHEREIN WE SEE THE RENAISSANCE FLIT THROUGH SIENA

Siena, although a Tuscan city like Florence, showed from the first an art quite different from that of her great rival. Her sense of colour and her pietistic fervour were alien to Florence. And the two cities wrought side by side a strangely different art, which had as strange influences.

CHAPTER VI

OF THE COMING OF ART INTO FLORENCE

THE PAINTERS OF CENTRAL ITALY

To get back to Florence: the Florentines were made of far different stuff from the Sienese. Of the Sienese ecstasies and spiritual exaltation they knew nothing. A sober, sane, and level-headed—indeed calculating—people, they left mysticism to Siena, and prided themselves on knowledge and intellect.

GIOTTO
1266-1337

That GIOTTO was the first Florentine painter of genius there is no question. Some ten years younger than Duccio, whether he were influenced by his Sienese contemporary is not known, but that *Rucellai Madonna* hotly suggests the likelihood. Whether so or not, the Byzantine influence which Duccio could not wholly rid from himself, Giotto absolutely put from him; and, by consequence, Giotto, as claimed by the Florentines, may be said to be the first true painter of the Renaissance. Born at Colle, by Florence, in 1266, Giotto di Bondone died in 1337. A shepherd's boy he was, and that his gifts were discovered by Cimabue, and that Cimabue took him into his studio, seem to have been true enough, though the influence is hard to discover. He resisted all Byzantine habits and tricks of style; his life in the open with the flocks he tended had revealed nature to him as his supreme master, and the moods of the hillsides guided him in his art's utterance. In Giotto we have the first clear note of the new spirit that was being breathed

across the land. In the work of his hands is seen that grasp of the figure as a real form, individual and capable of movement—to him was revealed the craft to display the body as being more than a flat decorative surface. Whatsoever his weaknesses of drawing, if his heads be vulgar and his draperies heavy, at least his direct habit of going straight to nature instead of founding his vision upon, and enslaving his hands to, the tricks of thumb of the Byzantine convention, led him to a vigorous and poetic statement and a grip of the essential fact that art is the utterance of life—and his *frescoes of the Life of St. Francis* at Assisi, as well as the frescoes in the church of Santa Croce at Florence and at Padua, are famous. What he owed to this Cimabue of legend it would indeed be difficult to say; but what is certain is that he was deeply indebted to the Gothic workers, particularly to the Pisan sculptor Giovanni Pisano, a realist steeped in the Gothic spirit of France and the Rhine, who died in 1329.

Now, strange as it may seem, the sculptures known as low-reliefs by Giovanni Pisano affected the new revelation in painting more easily than might at first appear. Painting until the end of the Byzantine years, 1300, had concerned itself with the flat surface decoration alone. The low-reliefs of Pisano's sculpture, and the daily communion with nature, turned Giotto's eyes to the fact that figures and objects in nature have *depth*, as well as the height and width of the flat surface on which he painted, and the low-reliefs by their play of shadows revealed forms; and these truths forthwith convinced him that if sculpture in a next-to-flat employment of it could be made to suggest the roundness of the fully sculptured forms, so also could painting on a flat surface be made to suggest *depth*.

At once he created the endeavour of painters to paint

the figure and the objects in nature, instead of merely being flat to the eye, so that they looked as if one could pass the hand round and about them. In fact, he put forth his cunning of craftsmanship to try and paint on the flat wall or panel in such a way as to suggest the depth of things as they are seen in that equally flat surface, a mirror, and so aroused the illusion as if one could touch the forms, and feel out into the deeps of atmosphere about them.

Whatever the influences that trained his skill of hand, Giotto's supreme master was Nature. To nature he turned for the forms and colours wherewith to clothe the works of his imagination and whereby to utter that which he felt.

And now we realise the significance of Dante's oft-quoted couplet, which, whether Dante himself realised its full significance or not, gives just the exact fact that the Middle Ages, and Byzantine Art with them, were flown, and a new and real Art was born.

Giotto struck at once the wide gamut of art which became so marked a feature of the great Florentines. Dowered with a large intellect, and fitted by strength of body for sustained toil, enthusiastic for his art, he ranged through its several realms, filling Italy with the work of his hands, and creating a vigorous standard for those that came after him. From Padua, where he painted the *Legend of Mary* and the *Life of Christ*, to Rome, his frescoes adorn near upon every great city. In Florence he designed her beautiful bell-tower, and painted the *Stories of St. Francis* and *St. John* in the chapel of S. Croce.

His sound common-sense and genial temper, his wide humour, directed an unwearying energy to astounding achievement, and rid the Florentine genius at its very beginnings from ascetic formalism, taught it to go direct to life for inspiration, and rooted it deep in the dramatic

sense. Thus his greatest gift to Florence was the very essence of all art—vitality. At once the Madonna is above all things maternal—she smiles upon her babe. He made art human; and, in the doing, humanised religion. He saw that action and spacing were vital to the pictured surface; he painted before his simple faith had been touched by classic doubtings; he painted for a people who had no books, who, indeed, could not read—who learnt through their vision from pictured things.

OF THE COMING OF ART INTO FLORENCE

Sculptor, painter, and architect—he designed the Campanile in Florence—ranged widely, creating his art in Rome, Padua, Verona, Arezzo, Milan, and elsewhere, as well as in Florence, his influence became supreme throughout the greater part of Italy, and dominated Italian art until about 1400.

THE GIOTTESQUES

On the death of Giotto, his large empire of the arts fell away amongst his brilliant but less gifted followers, known to history as the Giottesques. Of these the GADDI of Florence, GIOTTINO, GIOVANNI DA MILANO, BERNARDO DADDI, ANTONIO VENEZIANO, PUCCIO CAPANNA, FRANCESCO DA VOLTERRA, BUONAMICO BUFFALMACO, the SPINELLI family, LORENZO MONACO, and the rest, not only show by their names his wide influence, but they carried his message throughout all Italy. They pushed forward his achievement no whit, nor reached to his heights of artistry. TADDEO GADDI, his favourite pupil and godson, is perhaps the best type of a Giottesque.

ORCAGNA

1308 - 1368

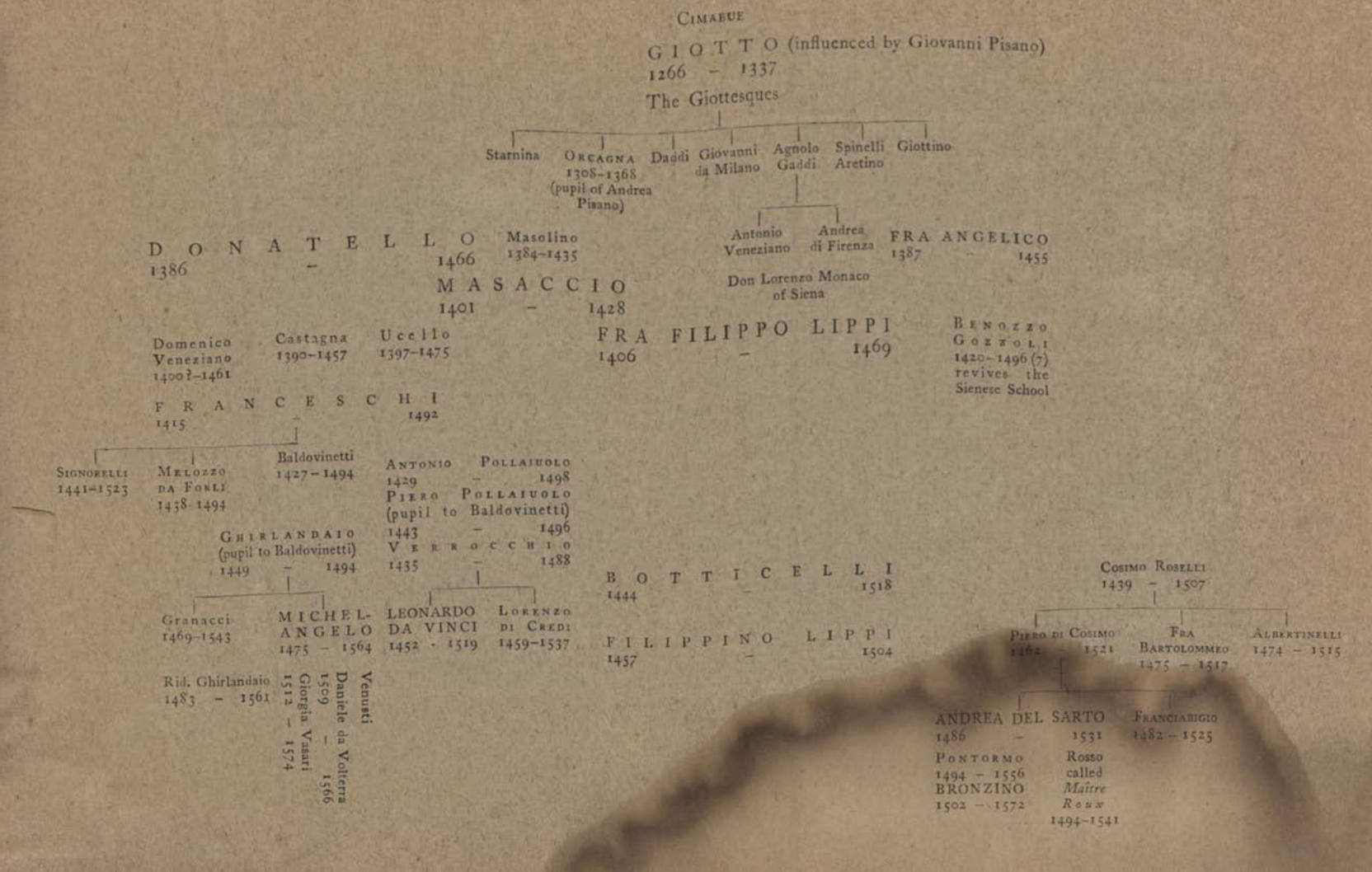
The greatest of them all was the richly gifted ANDREA DI CIONE, better known as ORCAGNA, born about 1308, and

THE PAINTERS OF CENTRAL ITALY

dying in 1368, goldsmith, sculptor, architect, and painter, who, a pupil of Andrea Pisano, founded his style of painting on Giotto. Orcagna's altarpiece and frescoes of *The Last Judgment* and *Paradise* in S. Maria Novella at Florence prove him also to be not without a debt to Ambrogio Lorenzetti of Siena by their Sienese sense of beauty and elegance. For Orcagna would paint Paradise as well as Hell—the beauty of his faces, and his employment of faces in profile, face after face, is very characteristic, giving an effect as of petals of flowers.

However, if Giotto's influence after his death, during the remaining thirteen-hundreds, saw a tendency to break up into a decadence, if brilliant decadence—that is to say that his followers but developed his manner and saw only through his spectacles instead of going to Nature herself—Giotto's influence must not be dismissed with the Giottesques. The Giottesques, spread thoughout Italy, were ingenious illustrators of the Scriptures, men of considerable invention; but, concentrating their attention on narrative or story, instead of upon life as they saw it, and steeped in the mere tricks of thumb of Giotto, they made no advance upon the art of their master. Nevertheless Giottism, though it looked as though it were to dwindle away in the Giottesques, was to inspire one great artist before it passed away—the monk FRA ANGELICO DA FIESOLE—though in some ways he put back his hand an hundred years into the spirit of Byzantine art, of which Giotto had rid the Italian genius.

THE RENAISSANCE IN FLORENCE



III

FRA ANGELICO

1387 – 1455

"VIRGIN AND CHILD"

(Uffizi)

Here we see the gentle friar's simple faith treated with childlike simplicity; and it will be noticed that the Child is still treated as a manikin, not as an infant.

1400

CHAPTER VII

OF THE TALE OF THE SAINTLY DOMINICAN

FRA ANGELICO
1387 – 1455

OF THE TALE OF THE SAINTLY DOMINICAN

THE saintly Dominican, Fra Angelico of Fiesole, born in 1387, and dying in 1455, covered by his working life the first half century of the fourteen-hundreds. Dominican though he was, the gentle and pious art of Fra Angelico was superbly fitted to guide painting into the utterance of the gentle Christianity preached by St. Francis of Assisi. The simple joys of belief, the very sense of happiness there is in the suffering for one's faith, the exquisite comfort of being of the chosen, these emotions and sensations found their artist in Fra Angelico. His was a cloistral soul, rapt in the mystic beatitude of reverent and undisturbed faith in his creed. He accounted it sin to paint from the nude; and whilst the whole artistry of his age was bent on realism, Angelico sought only to express the soul of man. 'Tis true that his genius is not without insipidity, his sweetness tends to cloy; his soul remains the soul of a child, and is not above puerility; and his eyes ranged ever within the narrow parish of the sheltered cloister. But Fra Angelico must not be judged solely by the simple little figures of angels and the like, who sing to fragile lutes, winging their simple flight across a peaceful background of gold. He painted demure virgins and angels incapable of sin, until we grow weary of their very goodness; but he painted also

the superb frescoes with which he is far too little associated—his *Flight into Egypt* is one of the masterpieces of his age; his exquisite *Annunciation* in the Church of Cortona set the style for many a masterpiece of the years to follow; indeed, *The Flight into Egypt* proves the good monk a painter of such considerable gifts as are all too often overlooked, both as to the treatment of the human form and of landscape, in both of which he pushed beyond the achievement of Giotto, even if he lacked the power of the greater man.

Fra Angelico is therefore not a painter lightly to be disposed of as the mere saintly person of the Italian chronicler Vasari. To understand the early dawning of the Renaissance in Italy, it is well to study the significance of the saintly Dominican.

Fra Angelico is held by some to be the connecting link between the Gothic or Giottesque period of Italian painting and the dawn of the Renaissance. As a matter of fact, the first low light of dawn had flashed across Italian skies over Florence with the coming of Giotto; a century later, 1400, saw Fra Angelico at work in the ever-growing light of that dawn. And his achievement is an epitome of that dawn. That Fra Angelico could rise to the dramatic from his exquisite choirs of angels, he proved in his sublime *Transfiguration* in San Marco.

Born in 1387 at Vicchio, and baptized as Guido, he changed his name to Giovanni (John) on entering the convent at Fiesole as a Dominican in 1407, in his twentieth year. But neither his parents nor he himself were to give him the name by which he was to come to fame. Men called him Fra Angelico—as Vasari's gossip pages hand down to us—in that "he gave his whole life to God's service, and to the doing of good works for mankind and for his neighbour"; and, adds Vasari, "he was entirely free

from guile, and holy in his acts." He "never took a brush in his hand until he had first offered a prayer; nor painted a *Crucifixion* without tears streaming down his cheeks." OF THE TALE OF THE SAINTLY DOMINICAN

Young as he was, on joining the Dominican order, Fra Angelico had clearly begun his career as painter, probably under the Giottesque painter and miniaturist Lorenzo Monaco. In that pupilage is a large significance. LORENZO MONACO (1370?-1425) was a Sienese; and to such must largely be attributed the Sienese tendency of Fra Angelico's art. It accounts for much in the art of Angelico that created a side stream in the achievement of Florence, as we shall see; not only his early work as miniaturist and painter, but his simplicity of colouring and handling of the brush, reveal the style of the illuminators. It was soon after joining the monastery that he painted the frescoes at Cortona and Foligno, going back to Fiesole in his thirty-first year (1418).

It was on the edge of his fiftieth year that Fra Angelico went to Florence to the convent of S. Marco, which, at the desire of Cosimo de' Medici, had been given by the Church to the Dominicans; and here it was, on the walls of the cloisters and cells and chapter-house, that Fra Angelico painted his masterpieces in the great series of frescoes which are a part of the glory of that wonderful city. Ever deeply interested in the art activity of his age, he had now come under the influence of Donatello and Masaccio, and a larger, broader style had entered into his craftsmanship, though he had not the vigour nor strength to develop his art to their greater range. Just as he had in his heart a hunger for the older miniaturists, so also his sensitive soul made him more akin to the Sienese masters in his tenderness and his eagerness to catch purity and beauty of form. To spiritual exaltation of an almost feminine intensity he

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devoted all his subtle gifts, so that his name is interwoven with the phrases, "angelic choirs" and "beatific visions." The more robust passions and more compelling emotions knew him not—so that when he dares to state a martyrdom, the dramatic sense hangs back and refuses to answer his call. But a vast gulf divides his early from his later work; and his eager interest in the sculpture of Ghiberti and Donatello, and in the paintings of the Brancacci Chapel by Masaccio, which were about to take Italian art forward in a giant stride, had their effect upon his later years, wherein we see the saintly Dominican step into the light of the increasing dawn of the Renaissance and leave Giottism behind him.

We shall see Fra Angelico's most famous pupil, Benozzo Gozzoli (born in 1420, and dying near the end of the century, in 1496), prove himself by his frescoes in the Palazzo Riccardi at Florence, and at San Gimignano and at Montefalco in Umbria, one of the most exquisite story-tellers of the Renaissance; but his naïvety could yield only the golden dreams of childhood, and his limits made the boundaries of too slender a world for the adventure of a great artist.

Indeed, Giottism threatened to end the art of Florence in charming and delicate decadence, as the art of her rival Siena evaporated in mere pietistic illustrations, had it not been for the rise of two Florentine sculptors, Ghiberti and Donatello, and the great genius of the youthful painter Masaccio, steeped in naturalism—going to the vigorous school of nature herself for inspiration, and giving themselves up to the impressions of nature.

CHAPTER VIII

WHICH TELLS OF THE MIGHT OF HULKING TOM

WHICH TELLS OF THE MIGHT OF HULKING TOM

THE Renaissance has dawned. The smoky twilight still lingers in the departing shadows of the night of the Middle Ages. But the sun of the Renaissance touches the edge of the world with light.

We shall see the artists striving henceforth to master the forms of nature—first to utter the depth as of things seen in the mirror of the vision, the roundness of things—and the perspective of things that helps to give this illusion of depth—then the life of the day, dress, portraiture, character. They essay landscape and architecture for backgrounds; and flowers of the field, beasts and birds, and living things. The Scriptures have to share a place with the legends of ancient Greece and Rome, seen and felt in a romantic mood wholly alien to Greece or Rome. The first half of the fourteen-hundreds prepares the way for the Golden Age of the Renaissance.

Petrarch in verse had brought humanism into the thirteen-hundreds. The fourteen-hundreds became more worldly.

MASACCIO

1401 – 1428

Florentine sculpture had its beginnings in LORENZO GHIBERTI (1378-1465), who was twenty-two when 1400 struck. He it was who wrought the bas-reliefs which decorate the famous bronze doors of the Baptistry at Florence, upon which he worked between 1405 and 1452—one of which

doors it was that Michelangelo said was worthy to adorn the gates of Paradise. These low-reliefs on the gates of the Baptistry were to have a wide effect on the whole of Florentine art. Some eight years younger than Ghiberti, came DONATELLO (1386-1466), raising his great statues of saints, creating his astounding portraits and low-reliefs, and modelling his exquisite busts of childhood with a sense of character, and a pure reference to nature, that proved his Gothic inspiration. This "naturalism" breathed the breath of life into bronze and marble under his cunning of hand; and his achievement is very Florence in spirit and ideals—slender, lithe, sinewy, energetic, and quick with expression. In him was an aim the very opposite to the classic ideal of antiquity; and he gave to modern sculpture its inspiration.

Now, it so chanced that there was born in 1401, one Tommaso di Giovanni di Simone Guidi, who was to become an astounding genius in painting by his nickname of MASACCIO—as we should say, "Hulking Tom"—though his all too short life of twenty-seven years (he died in 1428), and the fact that he wrought his genius in fresco upon the walls, make his mighty art little known outside of Florence.

Masaccio apprenticed himself to his art very early as a pupil to Masolino. This MASOLINO (1384-1435) had been under the Giottesque STARNINA, but had rejected the stiffness and stilted action of the Giottesques for a freer naturalness; indeed, Masolino's Eve, in the *Fall of Man* at the Brancacci Chapel in Florence, is said to be the first nude female figure painted from the life in modern art. Masolino, however, was unable to rid himself wholly of the mediæval shyness to state the full significance of the human figure. For Masaccio was reserved that mighty first endeavour.

OF PAINTING

WHICH TELLS OF THE MIGHT OF HULKING TOM

The naturalism in Hulking Tom, Masaccio, aroused by Masolino, was set ablaze by the example in sculpture of Donatello; and, in the famed Brancacci Chapel of the Church of the Carmine at Florence, the youthful Masaccio wrought those world-important frescoes that became the virile and far-reaching source of inspiration to the whole of that wonderful Florentine achievement in painting during the fourteen-hundreds. Henceforth the golden dreams of the pietistic illustrators gave way to vigour of handling and unflinching communion with nature. Masaccio was to die in his twenty-seventh year; but those frescoes of his in the Church of the Carmine at Florence became the school for the astounding achievement of the century. Masaccio, by his forthright vision, by his grasp of form, by his mastery of the human figure, and his sense of depth and volume of the pictured thing, thrust forward the artistry of painting, as revealed to Giotto, in as large a stride as had marked the advance of Giotto out of the formality of Byzantinism. In the full dawning, therefore, of the Renaissance of painting in Italy, stands out the burly figure of Masaccio. In Masaccio the sun of the Renaissance has arisen.

Suddenly Masaccio left Florence for Rome, whilst at work upon the frescoes of the Brancacci Chapel, and he went to his death, for he passed away at Rome in 1428, but in his twenty-seventh year.

That so young a man should, in the short span of his years, have achieved a master-work of such astounding power as *The Expulsion from Paradise* at the Brancacci Chapel of the Church of the Carmine in Florence is one of the wonders of genius. The superb modelling of the nude Adam and Eve, the sense of flesh and life, the reality of the movement, the dramatic rightness and force of

THE PAINTERS OF CENTRAL ITALY

gesture and expression, the glowing and mysterious effect of atmosphere, thrust the art of painting forward as by a miracle. The intensity of the sensed thing, the grip of the emotional significance of art, are equalled by the mature skill of hand to utter these subtle significances. Here is no formal illustration of an incident; but a dramatic transmission into our senses of the tragic intensity of a prodigious art. Through the skilfully created figures, by their action, movement, gesture, and atmosphere, wrought with rare power and cunning of hand, is brought into our sensing the spiritual significance of the greatness of the fall of man. Masaccio, scarce out of his youth, reveals himself a supreme master, gifted with the power to state grandeur and dignity by his arrangements, by his superb draughtmanship and modelling of form, by his consummate selection in gesture, gifted with the skill to do these things in paint as though he were a sculptor of colour, and impelled to his art by a sublime sense of drama. In him is prophecy of the grandeur of Leonardo da Vinci, of the awful sublimity of Michelangelo; into his hands has been delivered the sceptre that is to make Florence, this city of the lily, the queen of the Italian Renaissance. He took from Giotto the art that had begun to decline through the Giottesques, and he increased its tragic intensity and vigour and truthfulness, and handed it to Italy—a sublime heritage that was to bring to full flower the sombre splendour of Tuscan art. Before his burly figure all insipidity fled; and in the presence of his majestic genius, at grips with the realities and intensities of life, fragile pietism and the narrow convent ideals were swept away as though they departed into nunneries.

IV

PAOLO UCCELLO

1397 – 1475

TUSCAN SCHOOL

"THE ROUT OF SAN ROMANO"[1]

(NATIONAL GALLERY)

Niccolò da Tolentino, the leader of the Florentine forces, is represented on horseback directing the attack on the Sienese. He wears a rich damask headdress, his helmet being carried by his armour-bearer. These are the only two persons whose heads are bare.

The second and third of this series of battle pictures are in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence and in the Louvre.

Painted in tempera on wood. 6 ft. h. × 10 ft. 5 in. w. (1·829 × 3·174).

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[1] It has long ago been shown by Mr. H. P. Horne that this picture does no represent the Battle of Sant' Egidio.

CHAPTER IX

WHICH IS CHIEFLY CONCERNED WITH PERSPECTIVE

DOMENICO VENEZIANO

1400? – 1461

WHICH IS CHIEFLY CONCERNED WITH PERSPECTIVE

MASACCIO, short as was his life, revealed his art to two painters—whose names are linked together in a murder invented by the tongue of Vasari—DOMENICO VENEZIANO and ANDREA DAL CASTAGNO.

Domenico di Bartolommeo, better known as DOMENICO VENEZIANO, the Venetian, born about 1400 and dying in 1461, had learnt his craft in Venice, where he had received the secret of painting in oils. Thence he went southwards over the mountains into Tuscany, and was working at Perugia in 1438, on the edge of forty, when Cosimo de' Medici called him to Florence. Here he at once came under the thrall of Masaccio's Brancacci frescoes, which were a revelation to him, and caused a marked development in his artistry. Of his few known works, the most famous are the fresco of *John the Baptist and St. Francis* in S. Croce at Florence, a *Madonna and Saints* in the Uffizi, and the signed fresco of the *Madonna and Child Enthroned*, painted in a niche at the Canto de' Carnesecchi in Florence, but which has been removed on to canvas, and belongs to the National Gallery in London.

UCCELLO

1397 – 1475

Domenico Veneziano in turn strongly influenced Paolo di Dono, better known as UCCELLO, his contemporary.

Paolo Uccello—nicknamed "Paul of the Birds," from his fondness for them—is famous as being the first Florentine painter who set himself to the conquest of foreshortening and perspective. Indeed, his art teems with the sense of his challenge to the difficulties of this scientific side of the craftsmanship of art. His battle-pieces, of which the *Rout of San Romano* in tempera on wood at the National Gallery in London, is so fine an example both in its Venetian sense of colour, in its movement, and its scientific exultation in linear perspective and foreshortening, gave him also the scope for his delight in animal forms, even though his science be too insistent. The second of this series of *battle-pictures of S. Romano* by Uccello is at the Uffizi in Florence, and the third is at the Louvre. Uccello's admiration for the art of Giotto—in his grave sixty years before Uccello was born—is marked throughout his work; but he advanced his style under the influence of his contemporary, Domenico Veneziano; and his personal friendship for Donatello and the architect Brunelleschi was not without results on his keen and scientific brain. His sense of colour proved him wise in choosing painting as his chief activity in the arts. But, whilst Donatello influenced Masaccio, and Masaccio and Donatello affected the art of Domenico Veneziano, Uccello does not seem to have been directly greatly influenced by Masaccio himself.

ANDREA DAL CASTAGNO

1390? - 1457

But both the virile art of Masaccio and the art of Uccello, combined with the sculpture of Donatello, had an enormous effect upon the art of ANDREA DAL CASTAGNO, who was born about 1390 and died in 1457. He passed his youth near the hamlet of Castagno, watching his uncle's

WHICH IS CHIEFLY CONCERNED WITH PERSPECTIVE

cattle. The artistic instinct in him was set aflame by seeing a painter at work on a tabernacle; thereafter he began to scratch figures of animals on walls with his knife's point, and to draw with pieces of charcoal, in such remarkable fashion that it became the gossip and wonder of the neighbours. The gossip came to the ears of one of the Medici, who sent the youth to be trained in Florence. Thus Vasari retails the story; but the more ugly tale of Vasari, that Andrea's fierce jealousy of his rival, the Venetian Domenico, ended in his slaying Domenico Veneziano with a knife, has been proved a slander—not the lightest part of the proof being that the victim outlived his murder some four years—yet the slander hints, at any rate, of his violent temper and uncouth character. He was born into an age well-fitted to his rugged habits. And his grim vision, his rugged and harsh style, prove the quality of the man, who found his glory in painting rude and uncouth types, and whose unflinching interest in character and forthright communion with reality sent him to his art as much concerned with ugliness as with beauty, so long as the thing seen appealed to his feelings. For Castagno, neither Masaccio nor Donatello had lived in vain. Mere beauty, as beauty, had no concern for him. His art is given to rugged strength in terms of grandeur almost as of sculpture. And his vigorous art never found more congenial subject than in that lusty, swaggering portrait of *Pippo Spano*, at S. Apollonia in Florence, in which we see the mailed soldier-adventurer of his days, straddling with defiant and careless bearing, his broad sword-blade gripped across the thighs in his two strong hands. It is one of the first of the great portraits of the Renaissance. From this masterpiece breathes the reckless spirit, the careless laugh, the swashbuckling habit that filled all Italy with soldier-

adventurers, who came at last to her many thrones and seats of power, and held the people in the hollow of their hands. As famed are Castagno's *Last Supper* in the Church where the truculent Pippo Spano stands astride; and in the cathedral of the city is Castagno's equestrian portrait of *Niccolò da Tolentino,* all fine examples of his vigorous art. And it is easily understood why, when it was decided to have the picture painted of the gibbeted bodies of the partakers in the Albizzi conspiracy of 1435, Castagno was hailed to the painting of it.

FRANCESCHI

1415 - 1492

Working as pupil to Domenico Veneziano, and being admitted thereby into the secrets and mysteries of painting in oils, was PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA, or, as he should be called, PIERO DEI FRANCESCHI (1415?-1492). From Domenico Veneziano also he got his grip of character, but it was from Uccello that he caught his keen delight in perspective.

It is wont to class Franceschi as an early master of the school of Umbria—he was born in the little mountain town of Borgo San Sepolcro, and thither he returned at the end of his days to die. Whatsoever by birth, Tuscan he was by artistry, and a very Florentine of Tuscans. Though little of his work is known to-day, he wrought much, ranging over Italy to do the will of his patrons. The frescoes that he painted of the *Legends of the Cross* stand to-day where he wrought them in the Church of San Francesco at Arezzo. The scientific bent of his mind—even as a boy he was a mathematician—shows itself in close observation, a grip of anatomy, and a skill in perspective; indeed, his *Treatise on Perspective*, dedicated to the Duke Guidobaldo of Urbino, was a guide to the painters of his age. But he was rather

V

PIERO DEI FRANCESCHI

1415? – 1492

UMBRIAN SCHOOL

"THE NATIVITY"

(NATIONAL GALLERY)

The Infant Christ lies on the ground on the corner of the Virgin's mantle; she kneels beside him in adoration. To the right St. Joseph is seen sitting on the pack saddle of the ass; near him are two shepherds. In the distance a view of a hilly landscape and the towers of the city of Arezzo.

Painted on wood. 4 ft. 4½ in. h. × 4 ft. w. (1·333 × 1·219).

a forerunner to the greater genius of Florence that came after him, than a great achiever himself; though it must be remembered that Franceschi was the first painter to display a calculated skill in the painting of objects seen in the value created by their distance in atmosphere—what is called tone-values—that is to say, the subtle effect produced by perspective of colour in relation to its distance from the eye.

WHICH IS CHIEFLY CONCERNED WITH PERSPECTIVE

Piero dei Franceschi died blind on the 12th of October 1492, and was buried in the cathedral of his native town.

CHAPTER X

WHEREIN WE ARE INTRODUCED TO A FRIAR *WITH A ROVING EYE*

THE PAINTERS OF CENTRAL ITALY

IT is now necessary to call attention to the fact that there were two currents of Florentine art flowing side by side. We have seen the sombre realistic art, so typical of her genius, arising in the practice of Giotto, create the genius of Masaccio, and flow in the blood of Castagno and Franceschi. Alongside of this was the art of Fra Angelico, with hint of Siena in his blood. And now came

FRA FILIPPO LIPPI

1406 – 1469

The great Florentine art of Giotto had threatened to lapse into insipidity in the hands of the Giottesques; and Fra Angelico had arisen as the genius to complete its passing into an exquisite golden dreaminess, when Masaccio came, urged to it by the great art of the sculptor Donatello, and brought back the stern tragic intensity of Florentine art into its native vigour again. Uccello and Andrea dal Castagno completed the conquest, and disgusted the Florentines with the insipid. But the pietistic revelation of Fra Angelico did not go under. He himself, at the end of his days, had put forth a more vigorous artistic utterance; and out of his art was to be born a style that ran beside the more vigorous work of Masaccio and his successors.

It was a strange and perplexing age that brought forth the stern and virile art of Masaccio and Andrea dal Castagno,

fiercely concerned with character and strength and tragic intensity, on the one hand, and, on the other, the winsome and exquisite search for beauty of Fra Filippo Lippi, the worldly Carmelite. But there they grew, side by side. FRA FILIPPO LIPPI, the son of a butcher, has left us no tally of his early training as artist. Left an orphan at a tender age, it came about that at eight he was in the care of the Carmelite monastery, hard by his old home, and thereby became steeped in the atmosphere of the best Florentine painting. The Giottesque painter and miniaturist Lorenzo Monaco, Fra Angelico, and Masaccio were famous, and the lad's eyes at least dwelt upon their achievement. Growing up to youth in the precincts of the Carmine Church, he must often have loitered to watch Masaccio painting upon his frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel. Masaccio ended his short twenty-seven years of life in 1428, when Fra Filippo Lippi was twenty-two years of age; and three years thereafter (1431) the friar left the convent, for which he had shown but sorry vocation; and though he kept the friendship of the friars, and signed his pictures with his monastic name, he entered upon that stormy and romantic life, filled with worldly adventure and wild living, which was to make of him so strange a son of Holy Church. The Church secured him appointments and good pay for the work of his hands; but though his art was soon in wide demand, he launched himself upon a sea of money-troubles, was ever in want, entangled in violent quarrels with his patrons, careless and neglectful of his work, and hunted by creditors. Nor did he keep very strictly his vows of chastity—the flip of a petticoat ever caught his eye.

WHEREIN WE ARE INTRODUCED TO A FRIAR WITH A ROVING EYE

Filippo Lippi was turned fifty when he came to the Convent Church of San Margherita in Prato to paint a

Madonna for the Abbess. He had asked the Abbess to let one of the nuns, the beautiful, seventeen-year-old novice Lucrezia Buti, sit to him as the model. But the friar's blood burnt hot. He fell violently enamoured of the beautiful girl; and love grew up between them. The passionate friar took advantage of the solemn public festival of the display of the Holy Girdle to steal away with her to his house. Lucrezia Buti became in 1457 the mother of Filippo Lippi's son, who was in after years to rise to fame as Filippino Lippi. It was several years before the Pope, Pius II., absolved the friar and his nun from their vows to the Church, at the suit of Cosimo de' Medici, and made Lucrezia the lawful wife of the painter. Fra Filippo Lippi did not long live to play the wedded husband, dying at Spoleto on the 4th of October 1469, after a sharp and sudden illness, and leaving unfinished in the Cathedral Choir of Spoleto the frescoes of the *Life of the Virgin* that he had there gone to paint.

The lunette of *The Assumption*, painted by Filippo Lippi in tempera on a panel for Cosimo de' Medici, whose crest, three feathers held by a ring, is seen upon the design —a picture now at the National Gallery in London—is an exquisite example, and typical, of the friar's beauty of colouring and tenderness, and displays his gift of expressing the winsome sweetness for which his Madonnas are famous —the whole set in a glowing colour-harmony, and treated with wondrous finesse. This design of the Archangel Gabriel announcing to the Virgin Mary that she has been chosen to be the Mother of the Christ, became a favourite subject of the painters of the Renaissance. Fra Filippo Lippi, or Lippo Lippi as he is called for short, revealed such a beautiful sense of colour, that one regrets his early training for the Church. He was at heart a romantic poet.

VI

FRA FILIPPO LIPPI

1406? – 1469

TUSCAN SCHOOL

"THE ANNUNCIATION"

(National Gallery)

The Archangel Gabriel is seen in the act of announcing to the Virgin that she shall be the Mother of the Christ.

A lunette-shaped picture painted for Cosimo de' Medici and marked with his crest, three feathers tied together in a ring.

Painted in tempera on wood. 2 ft. 2 in. h. × 4 ft. 11½ in. w. (0·661 × 1·51).

WHEREIN WE ARE INTRODUCED TO A FRIAR WITH A ROVING EYE

His decorations in the choir of the cathedral (Duomo) at Prato, wherein he painted the *Legends of John the Baptist and Saint Stephen*, reveal his grasp of portraiture, his gift of character, and harmonious skill in grouping. In the dance of Salome before Herod, all his poetic sense is displayed. Here are the movement of the dance, dramatic force, and beauty of form. Here Lippo Lippi discovered the oneness of the arts of colour and music.

Filippo Lippi's place in the development of the art of painting is difficult to set down clearly unless as a parallel growth of Fra Angelico's artistry and significance—what may be called the Francis of Assisi mood—side by side with the tragic intensity of the growth of Masaccio's art. He owed his chief inspiration to Fra Angelico and the cloister that bred the soul of Fra Angelico; but his art, whilst it displays a fuller development of the craft of painting, lacks, as his life lacked, the tenderness and rarity of spiritual feeling of the saintly Dominican. Of Masaccio's strength he shows small sign, yet he did not gaze at Masaccio working upon the Brancacci frescoes in vain. But he had a vision that both his forerunners lacked. Apart from the charm of his work, apart from the sensuous revelling in beauty of form, he came to the utterance of glowing and rich colour, and his painted surfaces knew the light of the sun; his generous temperament revelled in the forms of flowers, and his eyes delighted in the mother's love and tender care of babes; to him the fresh babies' faces and the delicate fragile beauty of the Madonna were an eternal inspiration. His influence on the Church painters was very great; and he stands out as increaser of the development of Fra Angelico's spirit in Florentine painting, as Masaccio does towards the more vigorous and tragic Florentine art of Giotto.

BENOZZO GOZZOLI

1420 - 1497.

We have already seen that Fra Angelico's most famous pupil, Benozzo Gozzoli, carried on his master's tradition. Like Filippo Lippi, he could not wholly escape the knowledge of the increase of the painter's gamut through the revelations of Masaccio. But, like Filippo Lippi, or perhaps even more so, he was astoundingly little moved by it, and wrought almost wholly in the atmosphere of his master Fra Angelico, whom he aided in the making of the frescoes at Orvieto. But Benozzo Gozzoli shook himself free at last from the monastic influence of the saintly Dominican (for, be it remembered, he lived into the second half, indeed almost through the second half, of the fourteen-hundreds, which saw a very marked increase of artistic genius), and the art of his later life concerned itself with what was his chief achievement and inclination—the painting of the life of his day, which is clumsily known as genre. It is true that Benozzo Gozzoli continued to paint stories from Scripture as the subjects of his frescoes; but these stories were the excuse for the recording of the habits and life of his day, and of the costumes and personalities of that day. Whether he paint the walls of the Campo Santo at Pisa with the *Building of the Tower of Babel*, or the more famous frescoes in the chapel of the Riccardi Palace in Florence with the *Procession of the Magi and Angels*, wherein the Medici family are shown at the head of the richly arrayed cavalcade, Benozzo Gozzoli stands revealed as a charming chronicler, stating with naïve grace and beauty the habits of his age. A prodigious and facile worker, Benozzo Gozzoli uttered the love of nature, a blithe delight in the idyllic life of the day—the vintage, the marriage-dance, the squabbles of

small boys, the jocularity of servants, children carrying their books to school—it all holds the romantic music of jocund life. He enjoyed the intimate friendship of the princely house of the Medici; and one of his greatest achievements is the equestrian portrait of Lorenzo de' Medici, Lorenzo the Magnificent, as one of the Magi in the fresco of the Riccardi Palace at Florence—indeed, the whole of this fresco is redolent of the life of Florence in the fourteen-hundreds. And if he lack his master's simple faith and religious emotion, he but accentuates the fact of the increasing public interest in worldly splendour and fading religious fervour, just as Filippo Lippi's art shows a more sensuous and worldly religious spirit in marked contrast with the earlier, simpler, and more childlike faith of Fra Angelico.

WHEREIN WE ARE INTRODUCED TO A FRIAR WITH A ROVING EYE

Benozzo Gozzoli (and probably Fra Lippo Lippi) trained a pupil of whose life and work but little is known, ZENOBIO MACHIAVELLI (1418-1479); and there wrought also in Florence a follower of Filippo Lippi, and pupil to Giuliano Pesello, FRANCESCO PESELLINO (1422-1457), who is remarkable for his decorative gifts in colour, and famed for his paintings of cassone panels.

Of Filippo Lippi's pupils and followers also were FRA DIAMANTE and JACOPO DEL SELLAJO.

VII

ANTONIO POLLAIUOLO

1429 – 1498

AND

PIERO POLLAIUOLO

1443 – 1496

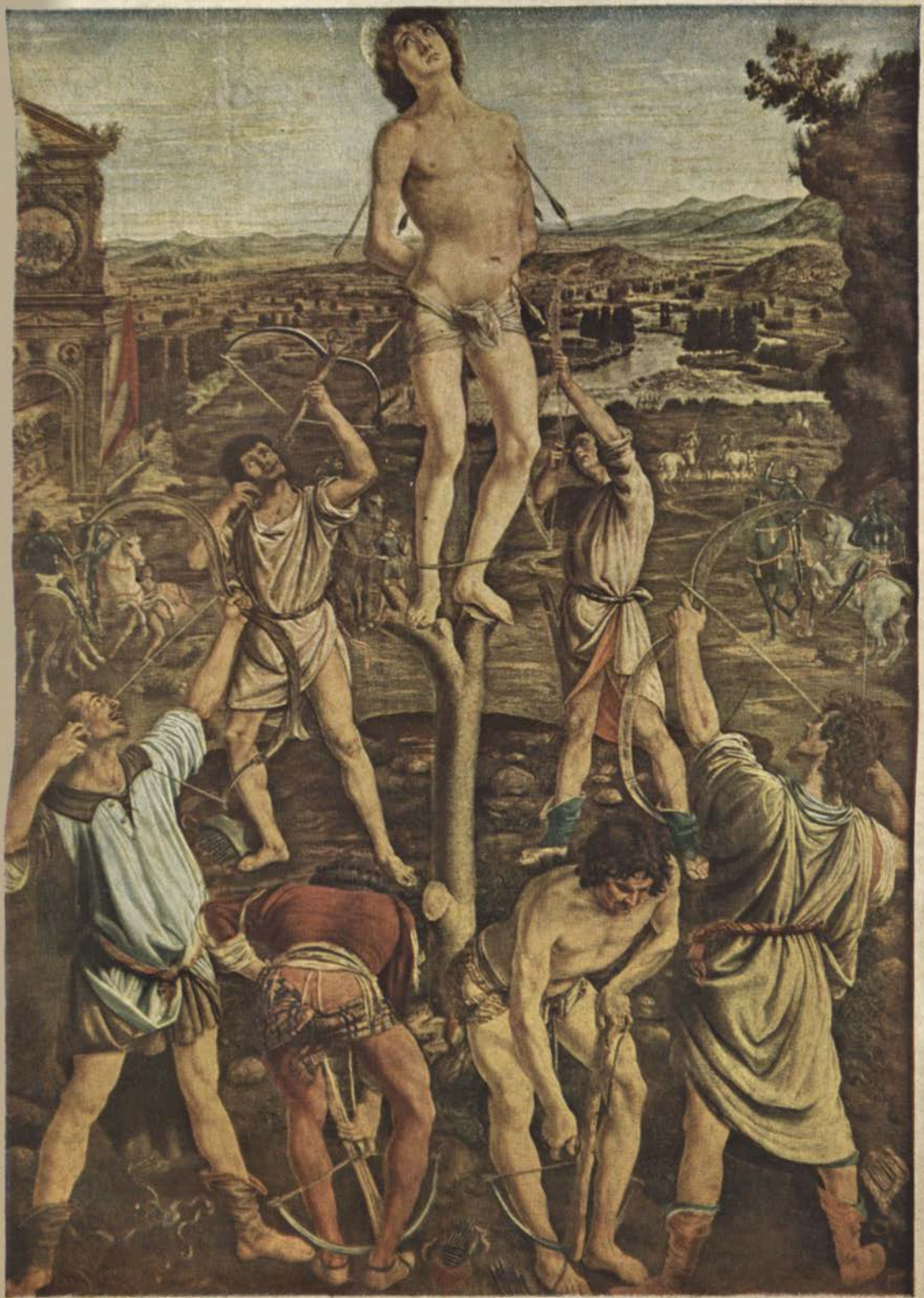
FLORENTINE SCHOOL

"THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. SEBASTIAN"

(NATIONAL GALLERY)

St. Sebastian bound to the trunk of a tree. his body pierced with arrows.

Painted in oil on wood. 9 ft. 6 in. h. × 6 ft. 7½ in. w. (2·895 × 2·019).



THE GOLDSMITH-PAINTERS OF FLORENCE

VIII

VERROCHIO

1435 – 1488

"VIRGIN AND CHILD"

When it is remembered that Verrochio was the master of Leonardo da Vinci, amongst other great pupils, it will be realised how prodigious an influence he had upon the men who came after him.

IX

BOTTICELLI

1444 – 1510

FLORENTINE SCHOOL

"GIOVANNA DEGLI ALBIZZI AND THE THREE GRACES"

(Giovanna Albizzi et les Trois Grâces ou les Vertus)

(LOUVRE)

To the right Giovanna, a young woman in a red-brown dress, wearing a white veil on her golden hair and a necklace of pearls round her neck, advances towards four maidens clad in delicately-tinted robes. She holds in her outstretched hands a white linen cloth into which the four maidens throw flowers symbolic of the Virtues.

Fresco painting detached from the wall. 7 ft. 3 in. × 9 ft. 4 in. (2·12 × 2·84).

1450

CHAPTER XI

WHICH SHOWS THE KINSHIP OF PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

WHICH SHOWS THE KINSHIP OF PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

THERE arose in Florence, about the middle fourteen-hundreds, a group of painters who had served their early apprenticeship in the goldsmiths' shops.

ANTONIO POLLAIUOLO AND PIERO POLLAIUOLO
1429 – 1498 1443 – 1496

The two brothers POLLAIUOLO were born in Florence; the elder, Antonio Pollaiuolo, being apprenticed by his father to a goldsmith, one Bartoluccio, who was stepfather to the famous sculptor Lorenzo Ghiberti, him who wrought the gates to the Baptistery of Florence which were to win Michelangelo's praise in the years to come, as being "worthy to set at the entrance to Paradise"; and it was to assist in the modelling of some of the ornaments of these gates that young Antonio Pollaiuolo was employed. Antonio Pollaiuolo was soon a goldsmith working on his own account, and was to become a famous sculptor in bronze. To that fame Cellini paid his weighty tribute that Pollaiuolo's designs were of such excellence and beauty that all the goldsmiths and many sculptors and painters made use of them. Antonio, strongly influenced as a sculptor by Donatello

THE GOLD-SMITH-PAINTERS OF FLORENCE

and as a painter by Uccello, is said to have been the first artist to dissect the dead in order to study anatomy. It was in the latter end of his life that he took to painting; and was one of the earliest of the Florentine artists to employ oils. Older than his brother by fourteen years, he survived him a couple of years.

PIERO POLLAIUOLO (1443-1496) was a painter from the beginning of his career. Indeed, he is reputed to have worked as quite a child in the studios of BALDOVINETTI and Andrea dal Castagno; but he must have been little more than a mere child under Castagno, since that rugged and forceful man died when the boy was thirteen.

The *Martyrdom of St. Sebastian* at the National Gallery in London is vastly interesting not only on its own account, as showing the Masaccio tradition of forceful realism in which the Pollaiuoli were bred, but as having been painted by both brothers. The elder Antonio's sculpturesque quality is seen in the vigorous and severe drawing of the sculptor, reared in Donatello's atmosphere, and his knowledge of anatomy is fully revealed in his grip of the human form and his skill in stating the human movement, just as the younger Piero's colour-faculty reveals the painter.

VERROCCHIO

1435 – 1488

The most famous pupil of the two Pollaiuoli was ANDREA DEL VERROCCHIO. But it was to his pupilage under Donatello that Verrocchio was most deeply indebted for his mastery. Most famous as a sculptor—he is immortal as the creator of one of the great equestrian statues of the Renaissance, the world-known figure of the great *condottiere* Colleone at Venice (1479)—he also came to high repute as a painter; and as such had a far-reaching and strong

X

BOTTICELLI

1444 - 1510

"SPRING"

(In the Florence Academy)

The date of this painting is much debated. It may probably be about 1478, before the Roman visit. Reading from the left the figures are Mercury, the Three Graces, Venus, Primavera the Spring-maiden, Flora, and Zephyrus.

Painted in tempera on wood.

WHICH SHOWS THE KINSHIP OF PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

influence upon the great art of Florence. And no less famous than as sculptor and painter was he as master. Leonardo da Vinci, Lorenzo di Credi, and many others who came to high fame were his pupils.

Verrocchio reveals an exquisite sense of the values of light and shade, which added prodigiously to the development of the Florentine achievement in the mastery of the *depth in painting*—or the mirrored design.

Of the rare paintings from his hand that have come down to us, is the celebrated *Baptism of Christ* at the Academy of Florence, in which the angel was painted by Verrocchio's greatest pupil, Leonardo da Vinci.

Verrocchio has been held to be the first of the Florentines who understood landscape; of a truth he realised the part played in landscape by light and air, and their influence on forms. But the Italian genius for landscape must ever be spoken of with reservations. Twenty years before Verrocchio was born, as we shall see, the Van Eycks had painted landscape in exquisite fashion in Flanders; and had created a spirit in art which was to achieve, in the lowlands to the south of France, landscape of a power undreamed of by the whole Italian genius.

It has been neatly said of late that "Italian art was the favoured child, but not the eldest child, of the Renaissance"; and it is well to remember this always in surveying the achievement of Italy and of the Renaissance.

With what exquisite sense Verrocchio painted landscape you shall see in his *Annunciation* in the Uffizi, where he essayed the difficult problem of twilight with a poetic intensity that was rarely excelled in the whole Italian achievement.

CHAPTER XII

WHEREIN WE ARE INTRODUCED TO THE POET OF THE SPRINGTIME OF THE RENAISSANCE

THE GOLDSMITH-PAINTERS OF FLORENCE

THE Turk took Constantinople in 1453, and sent her scholars fleeing out of the land. To Florence came a brilliant group, bearing with them the Platonic love of Love and Beauty that created the Neo-Platonism. The year that Constantinople fell, there was a tanner's son, a boy of nine, in Florence, who was to become the head and front of her Neo-Platonism, and create it into terms of line and colour, his nickname Botticelli.

BOTTICELLI: "THE REANIMATE GREEK"

1444 – 1510

Nine years younger than Verrocchio was a young goldsmith, BOTTICELLI, destined to a great career, destined also to come into his own again through a renewed vogue by the strange means of an affected "æsthetic" cult that passed over England like a plague of culture in the late eighteen-hundreds.

Alessandro di Mariano di Vanni dei Filipepi, better known and world-famous as SANDRO BOTTICELLI (1444-1510), is so individual, so original in his art, master of so fascinating and personal a style, that he stands out as creating almost a new development of painting—and, as a matter of fact, he and his contemporaries do reveal an atmosphere in their art which was attune to new and marked developments throughout Italian life in the last half of the fourteen-hundreds.

XI

SANDRO BOTTICELLI

1444 – 1510

FLORENTINE SCHOOL

"MARS AND VENUS"

(NATIONAL GALLERY)

The goddess, clothed in white and gold, is awake; Mars lies asleep. Four infant satyrs are playing about him; one of them tries to rouse him by blowing on a shell.

Painted in tempera on wood. 2 ft. 3½ in. h. × 5 ft. 8 in. w. (0·698 × 1·727).

PAINTING

WHEREIN WE ARE INTRODUCED TO THE POET OF THE SPRING-TIME OF THE RENAISSANCE

We have seen that Florentine art from the beginning of the century had received two new impulses that had rapidly urged it forward to fresh achievement. On the one hand, Masaccio, powerfully impressed by the sculptor Donatello, had raised a school of intensely realistic painting, rugged and forthright, that had brought forth Domenico Veneziano, Andrea dal Castagno, Uccello, Dei Franceschi; on the other hand, the Giottesques had bred the tender and beauty-seeking aims of Fra Angelico, Fra Filippo Lippi, and Benozzo Gozzoli. The latter half of the century saw the rise of the goldsmith-painters, of whom the brothers Pollaiuoli were steeped in the severer and dramatic tradition of the realists born out of the art of Donatello and Masaccio. The beauty-seeking and religiously tender side of Florentine art was also to create a school akin to it in these latter fourteen-hundreds, and out of the soul of Fra Filippo Lippi was to be born Botticelli. But with a difference. As the spiritual and monastic soul of Fra Angelico was usurped by the sensuous and more mundane religiosity of Fra Filippo Lippi, so in turn was the Greek soul of Botticelli to usurp the throne of Filippo Lippi. And in the fact was a vast significance—not only for Florentine art but for all Italy.

From the moment that Christianity had ventured above-ground out of the catacombs and spread throughout the land, it had lost its essential communism and become a part of the Roman state. Its whole intention became Romanised and imperial. It dreamed of the kingdom of the earth. The end of the Dark Ages saw the church in Italy awakening, like all else in Italy, to the classic Renaissance that was stirring throughout the land.

By the middle fourteen-hundreds the classic imagery and classic concepts of antique Greece had arisen in the land, and taken possession of the Christian church in Italy.

THE GOLD-SMITH-PAINTERS OF FLORENCE

This bastard classicism and paganised Christianity mated and brought forth a strange and beautiful child—Renaissance Christianity—a stately edifice of worldly Christianity, wrought, through and through its sumptuous splendours, with the gold thread of Athenian ideals and forms and intention. Italy, from end to end of her, was a Splendid Sham. The republics, republican in name and form, were passing into the hands of rich families, such as the banker Medici in Florence, rich merchant-princes as in Venice, powerful soldier-adventurers (*condottieri*) as in Milan. And Christianity, in like fashion, jealously preserving the name and forms, was wholly Athenianised, and become a part of statecraft. By the middle of the fourteen-hundreds the revival of learning had completely triumphed. And the man who most exquisitely and most perfectly uttered this Hellenism of Christianity was "the reanimate Greek," Sandro Botticelli. In his hand's skill was the very incarnation of the Greek perfection of line, the haunting and visionary Greek sense of the joy of beauty in the human being. His art utters the complete triumph of paganism over Christianity. At his call Pan comes peeping through the bosky groves, his fluting is heard in the meadows, and the music of his reeden pipes is breathed from behind the very altars. Pan has been converted to Christianity, but his legs are the legs of the goats wont to skip to the Bacchanalian revels. The gods have descended from Olympus, and walk in procession with the saints to solemn church music; and one is hard put to it to discover which is saint and which antique god. The spirit of the Greeks and the spirit of the Christ are as poles apart, but Italy of the fourteen-hundreds essayed to weld them into a splendid and sumptuous whole. The result was an astounding freshening of the human aims and an awakening of human

XII

BOTTICELLI

1444 – 1510

"THE MADONNA OF THE MAGNIFICAT"

known also as

"THE CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN"

(From the Tondo in the Uffizi)

Probably painted about 1479. This painting is world-famous for the beauty of the head of the Madonna. The Virgin is writing her song of the Magnificat; the Child holds a symbolic pomegranate.

The tondo is 44 inches in diameter.

aspirations amidst a widespread debauchery, racked with crimes and villainies and treacheries such as make of the Renaissance years one vast shame. And this strange paradox stands out in nothing more skilfully revealed than in the art of painting that was the glory of this perplexing age, and in none more hauntingly than in the beautiful and wistful art of Sandro Botticelli.

WHEREIN WE ARE INTRODUCED TO THE POET OF THE SPRING-TIME OF THE RENAISSANCE

The son of a tanner of Florence, Sandro Botticelli, the youngest of four brothers, was dubbed his nickname of Botticelli, or "Little Cask," after the little barrel that hung as a sign outside his elder brother Giovanni's shop. The family name was dei Filipepi, but Botticelli always signed himself "Sandro di Mariano." He seems to have been the son of a second marriage, since he was young enough to be his elder brother Giovanni the tanner's child. Apprenticed as a boy of fifteen to a goldsmith, his brother Antonio, Botticelli had, soon thereafter, about the age of sixteen, stepped from the goldsmithing into the studio of Fra Filippo Lippi at Prato (1460), and for some years he worked under that master; but by the time Filippo Lippi left for Spoleto (1468), Botticelli at twenty-four returned to Florence and was working for the brothers Pollaiuolo, and was already making a name for himself in Florence, indeed was come to considerable fame. But though Botticelli's artistry is founded deep upon the artistry of Filippo Lippi, he was at the same time enormously influenced by Antonio Pollaiuolo, who revealed to him his knowledge of anatomy, which until his day had not been of the most marked interest to the painters. The long panel of the *Adoration* at the National Gallery in London, once given to Filippino Lippi, was painted by Botticelli whilst with Fra Lippo Lippi.

How closely akin was the artistry of Botticelli to his

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THE GOLDSMITH-PAINTERS OF FLORENCE

contemporaries is seen in the fact that in the National Gallery in London, Botticelli's two early pictures of the *Adoration of the Magi* still remain officially attributed to Filippino Lippi. The well-known *Portrait of a Young Man*, in the same Gallery, is a superb work of about 1482, his thirty-eighth year. And he made his religious paintings an excuse for the portraiture of the celebrities of his day, as was become the fashion of his generation. But it is in the world-famous *Primavera*, or *Allegory of Spring*, in the Academy at Florence, painted in 1478, his thirty-fourth year; the *Mars and Venus*, now in the National Gallery, painted about 1485, his forty-first year; and the *Birth of Venus* in the Uffizi, painted in the following, his forty-second year, that Botticelli's supreme achievement is seen in all its poetic intensity, its exquisite imagination, its haunting sweet-sad melancholy, its wistfulness, its superb sense of colour, its mastery of line, and above all in its Hellenism as seen through Italian eyes.

The *Birth of Venus* might well stand for the revelation of Botticelli and the age of Botticelli—as though paganised angels wafted rude Hellenism over fair seas, amidst showers of roses, to the shores of Italy, into the arms of the springtime of the Renaissance. And the *Primavera*, that allegory of springtime, might well stand for the triumph of Hellenism in Italy, re-clothed and transplanted to a new world.

The *Mars and Venus* is the complete conquest of the new Hellenism. It is also known as *Alexander and his bride Roxana*, and, indeed, would seem to illustrate the lines wherein Lucian tells of the nuptials of Alexander and Roxana, even to the doings of the little goat-legged infant satyrlings who frolic with the stripped Alexander's armour. Nor was it the only time that Lucian's writings inspired

WHEREIN WE ARE INTRODUCED TO THE POET OF THE SPRING-TIME OF THE RENAISSANCE

the fantastic genius of Botticelli, as his *Calumny of Apelles* at the Uffizi proves. Whether Alexander or Mars is at best a formality—the sleeping warrior is said to be Giuliano de' Medici, dreaming of his beloved Simonetta who reclines at his feet—La Bella Simonetta, the beautiful young wife of Marco Vespucci; she, who was the reigning beauty of the age, inspired the genius of "the reanimate Greek"; she who, when she died in 1476, was borne to her grave through the streets of Florence with her face uncovered that the world might see the last of her wondrous and much-hymned beauty. La Bella Simonetta was the most famed queen in that reign of passion, made exquisite in picture and fashion and song, called the "epidemic of love," that held Florence as in a splendid dream during Lorenzo de' Medici's magnificent reign. Much argument has been lavished upon the dates of the creation of works by Botticelli's genius; but the pretty business is largely academic guesswork and the froth of wiseacres; it is difficult to believe that this great picture, tingling with the passion of desire, if it give us the presentment of Giuliano and La Bella Simonetta, was painted except from the life; yet by all the authorities and experts it is held to have been painted in 1485, nine years after the beauty was carried to her grave with face uncovered, and seven years after Giuliano, romantic idol of Florence, and knight of her chivalry and gallantry, had been struck down by the assassins of the Pazzi conspiracy as he knelt at mass, and himself borne to his grave a couple of years after his beloved Simonetta.

It is here, as always in his classic mood, that Botticelli is seen in the supreme exercise of his genius—here that he makes us feel the true atmosphere of his age. It was an atmosphere of exquisiteness, and Neo-Platonism was in full flower—Neo-Platonism, the Greek spirit in its decline, the

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Greek spirit rubbing eyes of wonder at the new gospel of pity and love that was coming to her from the East, to change her standards of heroism and her ideals. It was only this Platonic Hellenism that could be welded into the Christian system ; and all the culture of Italy was essaying so to weld it. And of that essaying, Botticelli is the supreme and consummate spirit, in the years that Lorenzo the Magnificent was lord of the destinies of Florence.

It is interesting to note how the artists are now employing the groups in sacred subjects to paint the portraits of the famous folk of the times. Art is passing from the patronage of the church to the palaces of the great. And it was a rare and handsome discovery that revealed, in the private apartments of the Pitti Palace in Florence, that *Pallas and the Centaur*, only some dozen years gone by, which Botticelli painted for the Medici family to commemorate the success of Lorenzo de' Medici's daring diplomatic success in winning back the friendship of the King of Naples in 1479.

In his church pictures, Botticelli is not generally seen in the same freedom of artistry; some trammel that he was never wholly able to shake from him, checked his full genius, even in his most exquisite Madonna pieces, though it was in his Madonnas that he created masterwork which holds the poetic atmosphere of his age, that haunting sense of beauty and of mystic wonder that never deserts his sensing, and to the interpretation of which his hand's skill brought such astounding craftsmanship. What more beautiful face does the whole Renaissance reveal to us than Botticelli's Madonna in the *Magnificat*, or, as it is also known, *The Coronation of the Virgin*? that circular picture which he is said to have founded upon an unfolded rose.

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The genius of Botticelli is so remarkable, that critics have come to look upon all he wrought as of prime value; and the *Nativity* at the National Gallery has received by consequence inordinate praise; but his faults stand out therein perhaps in emphasised fashion, for all its many fine qualities; and the picture, like many of his Roman frescoes, shows faltering and hesitation and some lack of unity, both in handling and arrangement and conception. At the foot of the design, painted on canvas, are three young men, Savonarola and his fellow-martyrs, Fra Silvestro and Fra Domenico, embraced by rejoicing angels, the devils creeping away to hide behind rocks. The faults of the Renaissance and the limitations of the Renaissance reveal themselves. He was in his fifty-sixth year when he painted it; his gaiety of spirit and rejoicing in the fresh harmonies of nature, seen in the paganism of his classic pieces, has given way to the more sombre religious resentment at the destruction and death of Savonarola; and there breathes from the work not only the new and tragic note of the collapse of early Christianity under the classic spirit of Neo-Platonism, but the base form of Greek, in which he wrote his testament above it, holds something of a grim desire to affirm his resentment against his dread:—"I, Alessandro, painted this picture at the end of the year 1500, during the troubles in Italy, in the half-time after the time during the fulfilment of the Eleventh Chapter of St. John, in the second woe of the Apocalypse, in the loosening on Earth of the Devil for three and a half years. After which he shall be chained, and we shall see him trodden under foot as in this picture." There is revealed the rank superstition that betrays the narrow advance of Savonarola and Botticelli and the world.

Botticelli had early come to favour with the Medici

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princes; he was a pleasant jovial man, if a man of moods, and loved good talk. The young Leonardo da Vinci became his friend, amongst others—and, like Leonardo, Botticelli never married.

Botticelli had been called to Rome, with Ghirlandaio and others, by Pope Sixtus IV. in 1482, his thirty-eighth year, to take part in the decoration of the famous Sistine Chapel; and three frescoes were wrought by him that are a part of its glory, though they do not reach to the fulfilment of his great Hellenic pieces. However, his fame greatly increased, money poured in, and he squandered it with his wonted recklessness. He was now the supreme painter of his age. To this period is said to belong his great achievement—*The Birth of Venus*.

Then loomed up the tragedy of Savonarola for all Florence. It was in 1490 that the tragic figure of the Dominican prior of San Marco entered into the tangled history of the age, for, in that year, Savonarola made his home in Florence, and forthwith filled the air thereof with black prophecies and bitter denunciations of the corruption of the Church and of the Republic. Lorenzo the Magnificent was only to know the beginning of it, for he died in 1492, the year that saw a Borgia seated upon the chair of St. Peter. For a few years Savonarola held the Republic together, inspiring Florence by his great personality—by 1496 he was foul of the Pope, and not only a Pope but a Borgia. The end was inevitable. The craft of the Borgias failed. Alexander VI. struck. On the last day of the carnival of 1497, an immense pile of the most glorious works of art, pictures, statues, miniatures, went up in the smoke of wanton religious mania, amidst the exultation of the people. In a couple of years Savonarola had lost his hold upon the city—the Borgia had triumphed. After ghastly

torments upon the rack, he was hanged over a fire on the 23rd of May 1498.

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Botticelli had looked up to Savonarola with the enthusiasm of an artistic nature; the fall and execution of the friar, and the fierce and passionate resentment of Savonarola's followers, known as the Piagnoni, turned his always wistful and sweet-sad spirit to a profound spiritual melancholy. Vasari's gossip pen tells us that he gave up all endeavour. It is certain that his artistic utterance lost its calm and wistful exultation, and became restless and brooding. He was already old and broken beyond his years; he was to live a decade longer, and to his workshop came the many out-of-work artists who had suffered for the broken cause—foregathering there in the evenings and talking of the past days when "Christ was king over Florence." Ghirlandaio, and Botticelli's pupil Filippino Lippi, went to the grave before him; Botticelli, hobbling on crutches, went to his gloomy end, passing away on the 17th of May 1510, in his sixty-sixth year, a broken man—broken in spirit, broken in fortune, broken in health—the supreme genius of his age, and the recognised champion of its achievement in painting. The springtime of the Greek spirit in Italy was come and gone—that spirit so wondrously expressed in pure poetic ecstasy of line and form and colour in the *Primavera* and *Birth of Venus*. A sombre and brooding age was to follow, of which his spirit had no understanding nor his art any conception. The real and full significance of the New Learning passed him by, as it was to pass by all Italy; it was too great for his conception or his strength—he came of a people too heavily overborne by tradition to shake off the shackles of the past. It was to set the North aflame, and bring the peoples of the north into their heritage. Rouse Italy it did, but only to end

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therein in a wistful sadness. Its full significance was to pass over the mountains to the north and seek fulfilment in the west in that strange destiny that would seem to make progress hunger to march towards the end of the earth where the setting sun sinks in a golden promise of the days to come. For there are mightier, vaster things than beauty and dreams; and strength and vigour and freedom are of first need to the body that would essay the mighty adventure of the fulness of life—and Botticelli had not even dreamed of these necessities in his exquisite visions. Savonarola could denounce the Pope even where he sat on the chair of Christendom — his eyes foresaw the new spirit that was to come over that church and over all Italy —but he shrank from Luther's daring to burn the bulls of Rome or to break from her authority.

Indeed, Botticelli and Botticelli's age were turning longing sad eyes backwards, glorifying what had been, and intent on the false gods that were seizing at the reins of tyrannies and little despotisms, instead of the welding of a great people into a vigorous brotherhood.

Yet he brought to his art, to the utterance of his age, a sense of line and form that recalled the genius of Athenian days; and his hand's skill found an exquisite craftsmanship that revealed with consummate mastery the desire of his emotions. He was, like all great artists, a visionary; he employed the dangerously parochial tricks of symbolism without weakening his power of suggesting mystic sensations into our sensing even in an age that has passed beyond the conceptions and ideals of his day. That he was keenly sensitive to the gloomy and morose art of Dante, and that his feet were still firmly planted upon the harsh ground of the Middle Ages, his drawings in illustration of Dante's poems abundantly prove, as one may see at Berlin. But

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though his spiritual sense reveals a haunting and wondrous vision, it is ever the questioning of life; it bathes all his art in sweet sadness as of the twilight; and in nothing is it more exquisitely given forth than in the exhalation as of a delicate fragrance that breathes from his nervous haunted Madonnas, sighing at the strange destiny that has beckoned to them to bear the sublime honour of being the Mother of God. Botticelli created a new type of beauty of which Athens knew naught—even as he essayed to grasp the significance of Hellenism and bring it into the flower-carpeted Italian meadows. But the Madonna has heard the pipes of Pan, if only by the distant woodlands; and her eyes are held by the ghostly and twilight vision that is in the eyes of the pallid goddesses who dance like shadows in the pale springtime of his great design, or step out of the tender-hued and stormless seas of his dreams on to the gentle grassy shores of his Italy.

Of all who ever wrought art, no man, whether Greek or Japanese, employed line with such astounding musical utterance as Botticelli. The only man of modern times who approached him was Aubrey Beardsley. His line gives forth rhythm to the sense of sight as of viols and lutes played by the wizardy of genius into our hearing.

THE SCHOOL OF BOTTICELLI

Modern research has done much to win back Botticelli's name to his many usurped masterpieces, and to rid his name from the works of lesser men. A nameless "AMICO DI SANDRO"—Friend of Sandro—has been brought back to nameless honour. And to FRANCESCO BOTTICINI, of confusing name, has been given back much work for long filched of his credit and attributed to Botticelli. Mr.

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Berenson, the authority on the Italian Schools, has done yeoman service in unravelling the tangled knot.

Of Botticelli's pupils, the most famous was Filippino Lippi, the son of Botticelli's master, Fra Filippo Lippi and of his nun wife; but another goldsmith-painter, Ghirlandaio, first claims a tribute, who wrought and lived within the years of Botticelli, and beside him, and with him, and died before him. Ghirlandaio had not the superb genius of his great fellow-artist; his art gave forth but in narrower fashion the conception of the age; but he wrought, with delightful colour-sense and remarkable style, an art that was worthy of his times and a significance, of a temper gracious and amiable, and of a pleasing achievement as musical as his name.

XIII

SCHOOL OF
DOMENICO GHIRLANDAIO
1449 – 1494

FLORENTINE SCHOOL
"PORTRAIT OF A GIRL"

(National Gallery)

Note.—This picture is probably by Bastiano Mainardi, the brother-in-law and assistant of Domenico Ghirlandaio.

The exquisite colour-scheme is particularly remarkable for the beauty of the painting of the hair, and its freshness of quality.

Painted in tempera on wood. 1 ft. 4 in. × 10¼ in. (0·405 m. × 0·26).

CHAPTER XIII

OF AN EXQUISITE MAKER OF GARLANDS

GHIRLANDAIO
1449 – 1494

OF AN EXQUISITE MAKER OF GARLANDS

To a silk-weaver of Florence, one Tomasso Bigordi, was born in 1449 his eldest son Domenico del Ghirlandaio. The child was therefore some five years younger than Botticelli. Ghirlandaio, the eldest of the three sons of our worthy silk-merchant, was apprenticed to a goldsmith, famous in the Florence of these days as the maker of the jewelled coronals called *ghirlande*, worn by the ladies of this city—and thereby Bigordi's eldest lad came to the name which has made him immortal. Like so many of the jewel-workers, Ghirlandaio was early using the brush also, became the pupil of Alessio Baldovinetti, and was soon so well known that he was painting panel-pictures and frescoes as far away as Rome and Lucca, Pisa and San Gimignano. Ghirlandaio's art is perhaps more obviously and easily seen than that of Botticelli; he reveals the more trivial side of the Florentine temperament, with its love of colours and innate sense of design, not without formality. But few who sense the significance of art would to-day dub him "the connecting link between the frescoes of Masaccio and of Raphael." He is said to have scolded his apprentices roundly for not carrying out trivial orders for patrons which would have filled his pockets with gold; and his art is not without the hint of a somewhat commonplace mind. He wholly lacks the poetic genius of Botticelli.

THE GOLD-SMITH-PAINTERS OF FLORENCE

Ghirlandaio's frescoes painted in the Sassetti Chapel in the Church of S. Trinità at Florence in 1485, his thirty-sixth year, are well known; but it is to the Church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence that one must go to see the supreme achievement of Ghirlandaio's art in fresco, in that series which he painted, along with his brother David, for Giovanni Tornabuoni, of scenes from the *Lives of St. John the Baptist and the Virgin Mary*—and to which, after five years of labour upon them, he in 1490 set his signature *Bighordi Grillandai.*

There had entered Ghirlandaio's workshop in 1484, the year before he finished the frescoes in the Sassetti Chapel, a boy of nine who was to win to a stupendous position in the art of all time as Michelangelo; and 'tis likely enough that the wonderful boy gazed upon the making of these frescoes and of the greater ones at Santa Maria Novella also in his youth, for Ghirlandaio wrote his *finis* to the foot of his great masterpieces when his pupil was in his fifteenth year—likely enough the lad ground and mixed the paints for their making as he was admitted to the secrets and mysteries of the craft which he himself was to employ in the years close at hand in supreme fashion. Indeed, the precocious lad had already astonished his master with his wondrous gift of draughtmanship, and was not above correcting that master's drawing.

It was whilst Ghirlandaio was at his five years of work upon his great frescoes at the Church of Santa Maria Novella for Giovanni Tornabuoni, that he came to paint, in 1488, on the edge of forty, his superb *Portrait of Giovanna Tornabuoni*, the year in which that beautiful woman died. Giovanna degli Albizzi, at the time she was married to Lorenzo Tornabuoni, had been painted by Botticelli, and her features immortalised thereby in superb

XIV

FILIPPINO LIPPI

1457 – 1504

TUSCAN SCHOOL

"THE VIRGIN AND CHILD, WITH ST. JEROME AND ST. DOMINIC"

(NATIONAL GALLERY)

This, the centre panel, shows the Virgin seated in the midst of a landscape, with the Infant Christ at her breast. On the left kneels St. Jerome clasping in his upraised hands a stone, with which he is about to beat his bare breast; on the right kneels St. Dominic reading in a book and holding his emblem the lily. In the background are various incidents from the life of St. Jerome. The predella is a Pietà with half figures of the Magdalen and St. Francis at either side. At the extreme ends are the arms of the Rucellai family, for whom the picture was painted.

Painted in tempera on wood. Centre panel 6 ft. 9 in. h. × 6 ft. 1 in. w. (2·056 × 1·853).

Predella 8 in. h. × 7 ft. 9 in. w. (0·203 × 2·361).

frescoes wrought by him for the Villa Lemmi, and passed out of sight under the whitewash of neglect until some thirty years or so ago, when they were discovered, on the whitewash being taken away, and were removed to the Louvre, where they are now one of France's most prized treasures. Giovanna Tornabuoni was fortunate indeed in her limners, for her portrait by Ghirlandaio, that used to hang on loan in the National Gallery in London, and has now passed into the possession of Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan, is one of the supreme achievements in the whole portraiture of the Italian Renaissance. The pure and exquisite profile, marked with all that strange grace and haunting distinction so inherent to the age, shows the ideal lady of quality who called forth the Florentine poet's praises when the fourteen-hundreds were at their full.

OF AN EXQUISITE MAKER OF GARLANDS

Amongst what were destined to be the last works from Ghirlandaio's hand, was the large panel of the *Visitation* at the Louvre, painted for Lorenzo Tornabuoni the year after his beautiful Giovanna died—for it is dated 1491—impressive in its simplicity, and treated with rare and noble grandeur of conception.

In the Louvre also is the panel of the famous *Portrait of a Bottle-nosed Man and Child*, painted by Ghirlandaio as though to prove that a poet could paint ugliness with realistic force, and yet convey the exquisite tenderness that lies in the affection of a child, blind to the defects of the thing it loves; and with what exquisite gifts Ghirlandaio achieved his art, the wide world has proved by its homage to the grace and charm whereby the winsome child wins its way into our affections with its love for the tender-hearted man whose affectionate eyes peep through so plain a mask.

It has been charged against Ghirlandaio that his art is weak in religious sentiment and in poetic imagination.

THE GOLDSMITH-PAINTERS OF FLORENCE

The word "poetic" is all too much an affair of cheapness. No man is an artist unless he be a poet. Poet is but the label for an artist in words; artist but the label for a poet in colour or form. But in imagination Ghirlandaio, though he may not have been compelling, was certainly not lacking, as his colour-sense fully reveals. His decorative sense was glowing and most markedly personal, and there is in all he did the well-bred sense of elegance. He, like Botticelli, Benozzo Gozzoli, and the painters of his age, has left us a rich store of portraiture of the great folk of the late fourteen-hundreds.

Ghirlandaio was to be cut off in the height of his career. He died suddenly, falling a victim to the plague of 1494, in his forty-fifth year, and his dust rests in the church of Santa Maria Novella, which his hand's skill did so much to adorn.

GHIRLANDAIO'S ARTIST KINSMEN

There is a charming painting, *Portrait of a Girl*, in the National Gallery in London, delightfully tinged with Ghirlandaio's quaint fancy, and long set down to Ghirlandaio's credit; it is now challenged as more likely to have been the work of BASTIANO MAINARDI, Ghirlandaio's brother-in-law;—whether so or not, the painting of the girl's fair hair is exquisite. Both of Domenico del Ghirlandaio's brothers, DAVID and BENEDETTO BIGORDI, were painters and assistants to Ghirlandaio, though they never reached to his gifts. And Ghirlandaio's son RIDOLFO (1483-1561) is said to have completed the painting of the draperies on Raphael's *La Belle Jardinière*. This Ridolfo learnt his craft as pupil to FRANCESCO GRANACCI, who had been pupil to his father Ghirlandaio.

CHAPTER XIV

OF THE SON OF A FRIAR AND A NUN

But to get back to the masters of the age, the contemporaries of Botticelli and Ghirlandaio; the greatest of Botticelli's pupils was

FILIPPINO LIPPI

1457 – 1504

Filippino Lippi, "Little Philip Lippi," the love-child of Fra Filippo Lippi and Lucrezia Buti, the nun, was born at Prato in 1457, amidst the scandal of the place. The worldly friar died when the child was but twelve years old, the boy passing to the care of Fra Diamante, who had been the friar's fellow-worker and humble partner in his artistry. The reckless friar seems, indeed, to have kept the affection of the scandalised monks of his order. The lad Filippino Lippi soon thereafter was working in the studio of Botticelli, and the art of Botticelli reveals its influence over all that the son of his own master was to give to the world. Filippino Lippi's early work is so absolutely founded upon the art of his master, that his name has undoubtedly been given to several of Botticelli's paintings —and is still so given even in one or two of the great galleries, though there is much disputing thereon by the scientific writers upon art. Several paintings by Botticelli are given to Filippino Lippi in the National Gallery in London.

In 1480, his twenty-third year, Filippino Lippi was

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appointed to paint his *Vision of St. Bernard* in the Badia at Florence, and had thus early made considerable reputation —his achievement greatly increased it; for, four years thereafter, in 1484, his twenty-seventh year, Filippino Lippi was appointed to finish the frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel of the Carmine Church which had been left incomplete by Masaccio at his early death half a century before, and the young fellow adapted his gifts with astonishing judgment to utter an art in tune with that of the great dead master.

Three years after he began his work upon the Brancacci Chapel, in 1487, his thirtieth year, Filippino Lippi had won the approval of Filippo Strozzi, who chose him to paint the famous and superb, if flamboyant, *frescoes in the Chapel of the Strozzi Family* at Santa Maria Novella in Florence, which have for motive the lives of St. John the Baptist and of St. Philip, his patron's patron-saint.

He wrought upon these frescoes for fifteen years, until he was forty-five, a couple of years before his death, on the 18th of April 1504.

The world-famous painting of the *Virgin and Child, with St. Jerome and St. Dominic*, in the National Gallery in London, is of the supreme achievement of Filippino Lippi's art. Beautiful and gracious in treatment, glowing and golden in colour, it advances the art of painting in its depth and exquisite harmonies. Painted for the Rucellai Chapel, in the church of San Pancrazio at Florence, it was afterwards taken to the Palazzo Rucellai, where it hung until sold to Britain in 1857, in its complete form, including its *Predella*, on the ends of which are the arms of the Rucellai family, whence it is sometimes known as *the Rucellai Madonna*. The golden landscape, painted with a glorious sense of atmosphere, tells the story of the lion and the ass,

holding the legend of St. Jerome in exquisitely rendered restraint. The whole conception reveals Filippino Lippi at the height of his powers, thrusting forward the art of the last years of the fourteen-hundreds towards its modern development.

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He thrice again reached nearly to this astounding accomplishment—in the *Vision of St. Bernard* at the Badia; in the *tondo* of the *Virgin and Child, with St. John, St. Joseph, and St. Margaret*, now in the Warren collection at Boston in the United States; and in the *Altarpiece in the Church of S. Spirito* at Florence.

In the year 1504, that was to see the death of Filippino Lippi at forty-seven, there had just been finished the statue of *David* by Michelangelo, now grown to ever-increasing fame, on the edge of his thirtieth year.

That Filippino Lippi was held in high honour in the Florence of his day is proved by the fact that he was one of the jury called together to settle the site on which Michelangelo's great statue of *David* was to stand.

In the church of S. Maria Sopra Minerva at Rome, where Galileo was later to sign his famous recantation, Filippino Lippi painted a *Triumph of St. Thomas Aquinas.*

Of Filippino Lippi's pupils, two were of the name of Raffaelo, and a third Raffaelo of the same time adds confusion, especially as all three were sons of Bartolommeos. Raffaelo, called RAFFAELLINO DEL GARBO (1466-1524), has much of the delicacy and charm of Lorenzo di Credi; and several of Filippino Lippi's works have been credited to him. His chief works are a *Virgin and Child* at Berlin; an altarpiece at S. Spirito, Florence; and a *Resurrection* in the Academy at Florence. RAFFAELO DE' CAPPONI, another pupil of Filippino Lippi, is best known by his altarpiece in S. Maria Nuova at Florence. RAFFAELO DE' CARLI was

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a painter of a style akin to that of Perugino, and is best known by his altar-piece (1502) in the Corsini Palace at Florence.

Filippino Lippi, whose face we know from his well-known self-portrait at the Uffizi, shows in his features much of the significance of his art. Already, as the bells of Florence rang out the fourteen-hundreds, the astounding achievement of Florence in art was showing hints of that love of the flamboyant that men call baroque, that tendency to over-ornamentation and elaboration of detail inherent in the Florentine liking for detail even in its superb genius. This elaboration is a threat that easily overbalances into vulgarity, and much of the work of Filippino Lippi, as in the great frescoes at the Santa Maria Novella, held even more than a threat, with their over-insistence on details of draperies and Roman trophies upon over-elaborate buildings in his backgrounds. Already that danger of the baroque is come into Italy, led thereto by the hand of this greatly gifted man. It is when he paints his exquisite landscapes for scenery that the beautiful lands of Tuscany bring him to his supreme endeavour. He showed rare gifts of design and spacing, and he could paint his figures therein with large and dignified skill; but he was all too prone to forsake the large and simple breadth so beloved of the genius of his century, and to reject the winsome, delicate and ethereal types for less spiritual ideals, and to get lost in a restless and bizarre confusion of elaborate ornament and arrangement.

Therein he but voiced the Florence of his day. As the Renaissance in Italy reached towards 1500, the Greek spirit, that had brought doubt into the land, had triumphed, and worldly ideals of worldly success had wrecked the simpler

ideals of an earlier faith. The saints and madonnas still held the centre of the canvas, but swiftly the simplicity was going out of them, and a new significance, the breath of science, was withering their ancient freshness. Sincerity in art was flitting from the church, to be replaced by sumptuous splendour in the palaces of the great, leaving a handsome husk behind—for the Great demanded magnificence and the strut before the people. The artist was losing touch with the people, clambering out of the church, and glorifying the sumptuous homes of the greatly rich.

OF THE SON OF A FRIAR AND A NUN

The United Italy of which Dante dreamed, under an Italian Emperor at Rome, was not to be. The people were never united—never aimed at union. And their several arts were as far apart as though they had been alien nations. The art of Florence is the mirror of the age. Cosimo de' Medici was its great patron. The merchant princes were its nurses. They were the puppets of their age. The Medici encouraged the sensual and worldly tastes of the people, lured them away from sacred to profane subjects, impelled by the desire to lull them into love of splendour and glory of their chiefs rather than to brood on stern republicanism. It was their deliberate and calculated policy to enslave Florence. Lorenzo de' Medici flaunted his magnificence, deliberately enfeebling the people by luxury, enjoying voluptuous living himself, finding wide popularity therein, and seeing that, beside its glamour, stern republicanism looked grey to the people. The artists were not backward in suiting their art to the questionable taste of their patrons. It is true that Botticelli became in the end a "pious one," but "in many houses he painted roundels with his own hand, and of naked women plenty." It was against the decay of the public spirit by paganism, and the loss of republicanism in Florence, that Savonarola fought

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the tyrants in his own church, defied the very Pope, scorned the princes of Florence, attacked works of art, and died at the stake for it. The "prophet of S. Marco" may have seen with narrow eyes when he misjudged the real significance of Art and of the Renaissance; but he made no mistake when he attacked the debasing influences of the Renaissance, even whilst he missed its mighty impulses —for the Medici approved the debasing influences, and came to tyranny thereby.

XV

PIERO DI COSIMO

1462 – 1521

FLORENTINE SCHOOL

"THE DEATH OF PROCRIS"

(National Gallery)

Cephalus kneels at the head of Procris, whom he has accidentally shot.

Painted in tempera on poplar. 2 ft. 1½ in. h. × 6 ft. w. (0·647 × 1·828).

CHAPTER XV

OF THE DEEPS OF POETRY THAT MAY BE WITHIN THE ROUGH OUTER MAN

OF THE DEEPS OF POETRY THAT MAY BE WITHIN THE ROUGH OUTER MAN

WORKING at the same time in Florence as Verrocchio was a painter, COSIMO ROSSELLI, now chiefly known to fame as the master of the artists, Piero di Cosimo and Fra Bartolommeo. But Cosimo Rosselli was an artist of fine gifts, who was employed under Botticelli on work for the Sistine Chapel, in which he painted several frescoes. Cosimo Rosselli (1439-1507) came of artist forefathers.

PIERO DI COSIMO

1462 – 1521

Of about the same age as Filippino Lippi, Lorenzo di Credi, and Leonardo da Vinci, was PIERO DI COSIMO, whose picturesque and tuneful name was a tribute to his master, Cosimo Rosselli. Piero di Cosimo was the son of Lorenzo, an auger-maker of Florence; at twenty (1482) he went with his master, Cosimo Rosselli, to aid him in his work on the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel. But though the direct pupil of Cosimo Rosselli, he became an eager student of the art of Antonio Pollaiuolo, to whom he owed his knowledge of the nude, and was strongly affected by the work of Luca Signorelli, of Filippino Lippi, and of Leonardo da Vinci, which was being wrought about him, and he owes tribute to Botticelli. His paintings, being scattered throughout the great public galleries of Europe and the great private collections—more particularly in England—are widely known. His fine *Venus*,

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Mars, and Cupid at Berlin proves that his eyes had beheld Botticelli's masterpiece now in London, and his equally celebrated portrait of *La Bella Simonetta* at Chantilly reveals that not only had his eyes lingered upon Botticelli's craftsmanship, but that the beauty of the golden age of Florence and her queen of love had sat to him—this portrait used to be known as *Cleopatra*, and bore the credit of Pollaiuolo's name.

Piero di Cosimo was one of the famous jury appointed to decide on the site for Michelangelo's statue of *David* in Florence, and he pays tribute to the fact by painting the much-talked-of statue into the background of his *Portrait of a Warrior* in London.

Contemporary of Lorenzo di Credi, but of what different stuff, was Piero di Cosimo. For him was no smug painting of formal devotions; for him no mere imitations, no mimicries. His art utters the spirit of the age in consummate fashion. All the glamour of the new learning is there; the gods of antique days have come out of hiding and frisk abroad. Piero di Cosimo was a very Florentine of Florentines, the republican blood in him, a live individual, frank of tongue, witty, arrogant, whimsical, odd, his quaint soul sensitive to the subtlest delicacies of colour, grim of character, exquisitely sympathetic to sorrow and pain. No more perfect example of his skill of artistry has come down to us than the glowing harmonies of his *Death of Procris* at the National Gallery in London. Here we have very Florence of the late fourteen-hundreds. Here are the pagan gods stepping out of their long hiding in the shady groves, and careering abroad in Italian landscape. Within the space of the long narrow span of the painted surface, Piero di Cosimo has uttered his poem of love and jealousy, of death and remorse, in lyric fashion. The whispered

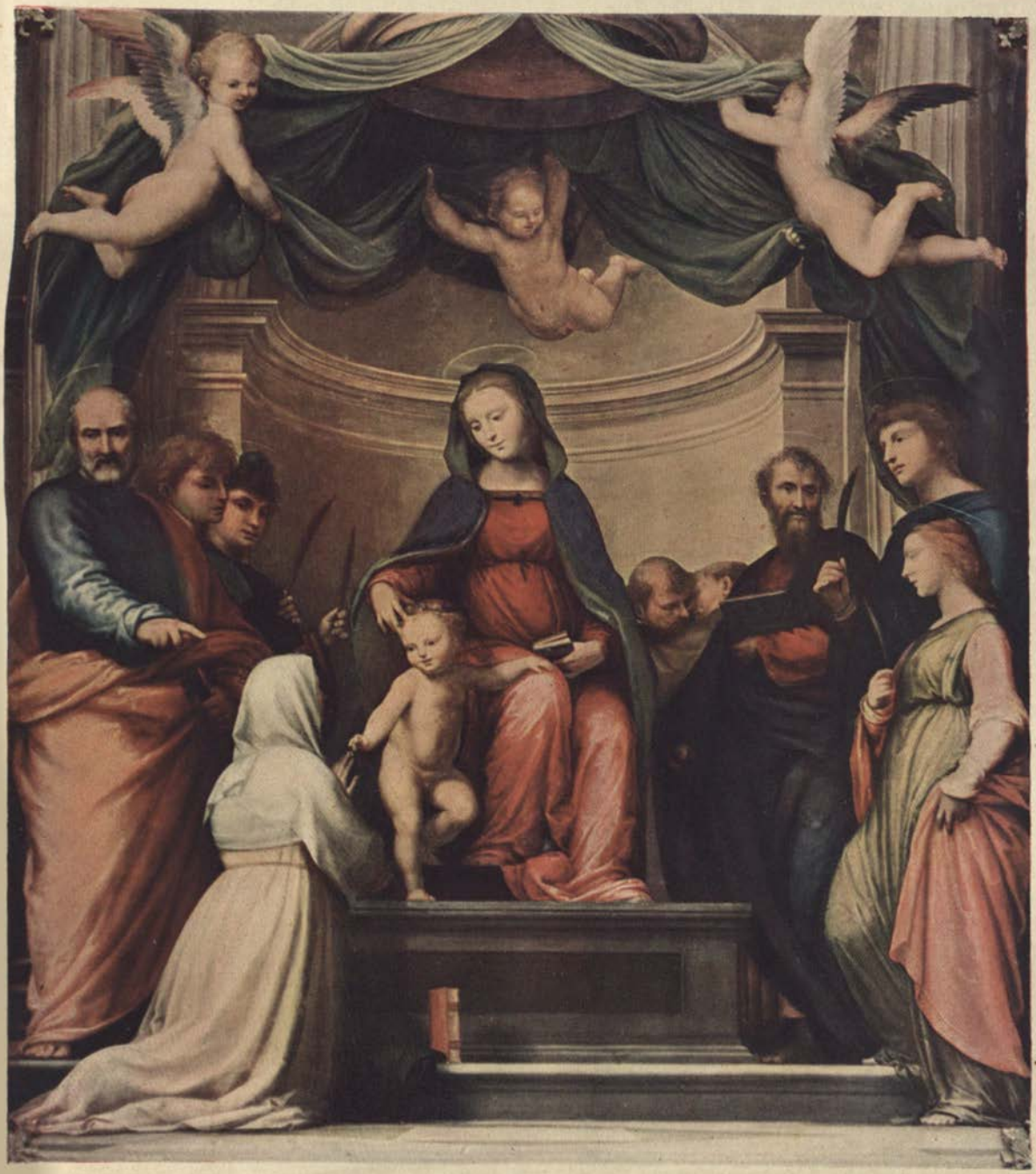
XVI

FRA BARTOLOMMEO

1475 – 1517

(Louvre)

"VIRGIN AND CHILD, WITH SAINTS"



slander that has sent the jealous Procris into her hiding-place in the thicket to watch her lover's meeting with an Unknown One, has also sent her to her death, when, leaping from hiding to confess her false suspicion, she is slain by the arrow of her lover as he quickly lets fly, startled by the rustle of what he took to be a wild beast in the bush; and as the life flows scarlet from her wounded throat, she tells her tale—and unseen Jupiter, bending his ear to hear the piteous tragedy, did well to change her into a star. 'Tis a literary theme, it's true enough, and the pictured sonnet needs a book of the words to explain it—therein the art is faulty enough, as indeed was much of the art of the Florentines—but, apart from this, what an exquisite thing it is! the pity of it, shown in the bereaved satyr and mourning dog, the wondrous landscape bathed in the glamour of that strange unheeding Nature which hesitates or halts a moment never, even to shed a tear, though death strike out of the blue at one of her myriad children. The sun shines on, the storks hie them across the heavens to their own wayfaring, all Nature heedless of the pitiful tragedy. How wondrous well the grim vision of this Piero di Cosimo has caught the cruelty and the pity of it! and with what exquisite poetry his hand has uttered what he has felt!

OF THE DEEPS OF POETRY THAT MAY BE WITHIN THE ROUGH OUTER MAN

Here is the eternal question that is stirring the hearts of thinking men in this Florence of the end of the fourteen-hundreds—that question writ across the art of Leonardo da Vinci in such masterly fashion. They were at grips with life, these men. And Piero di Cosimo not the least of them.

A solitary man, careless of the world's opinion of him, he had little but contempt for the things that men call the prizes of life. He was concerned only with uttering life as he saw and felt it. Shutting himself up to brood over his

own ideas, and detesting to let others see him at his work, the world judged him eccentric. Sensitive and irritable, with nerves that jarred at the crying of babes or coughing of men that passed by; fretted to madness by flies; and loathing the dark; when the humdrum folk saw him go by in the street they tapped their skulls significantly. But Piero di Cosimo lived in a world of dreams. People winked and nodded at each other, jerking the thumb of disdain at the untended, unpruned fruit-trees in his garden. A virile, odd fellow, full of arrogance and self-will, careless of comfort—his meals were of the hard-boiled eggs which he could cook as he boiled his glue, thereby saving fuel, and needed little elaborate dishing. He had the tricks and habits of the absent-minded—they said he talked overmuch, repeated the things he said to weariness; but they would laugh themselves to tears at times, for his thinking was wide and various, and in a good vein he was splendid company—a waggish soul, dry with the Florentine grim humour. But the doctors had no love for him; nor he for the doctors—he scoffed at physician or apothecary, and would have none of their nostrums, whereby he suffered no little, for, in his last years he fretted and fumed at the maiming paralysis that numbed his hands as he doddered about his studio, cursing the ill-luck that thwarted his hand's skill from giving utterance to the will of his brain, and reviling the plague that had fallen upon him, which would not even let him scratch his own irritating hands. But the grimness of the man never knew paralysis; at the last he would scoff at the idea of degradation in capital punishment, praising it instead as "a fine thing to go to death in the open air amidst a throng of people." His dramatic vision rose supreme, even as he gazed at the end of things.

Poetic, of infinite invention and exquisite imagination,

sensitive and quick to all the moods of life, he saw visions in the clouds and evolved poems out of the stained surfaces of walls. With a fine contempt for wordy philosophies, he concerned himself solely with life; and though all he wrought, whether portrait or religious picture or pagan mythology, was done with consummate skill, it was with the pagan gods in their wild sport and tragedies amidst the woods and meadows and by the seashore that he found his chief delight.

OF THE DEEPS OF POETRY THAT MAY BE WITHIN THE ROUGH OUTER MAN

He was fond of the long, wide panel of little height. The *Battle of the Centaurs and the Lapithae* shows him in his love of wild creatures, whether real or imaginary—proves, as does all his art, his passion for the wildness of Nature, Nature unspoiled by man's ordering, that Nature which, as he affirmed, "ought not to be interfered with."

Piero di Cosimo died in 1521, at Florence.

Of his pupils, one was to come to great fame, for there came from his training the genius of a tailor's son, whom the world knows as Andrea del Sarto.

CHAPTER XVI

OF THE GENTLE SOUL OF *HIM WHO CREATED THE LAY FIGURE*

THE GOLDSMITH-PAINTERS OF FLORENCE

We have seen a well-nigh forgotten painter of Florence in Verrocchio's day, one Cosimo Rosselli, training a student to create superb art as Piero di Cosimo. This Cosimo Rosselli must have had a rich sense of colour, since not only did Piero di Cosimo bring into Florentine art a wondrous rich and glowing colour, markedly golden as against the silvery tradition of Florentine painting; but there also came from Cosimo Rosselli's studio—or, as some hold, from his pupil Piero di Cosimo's studio—a boy of nine, son of a muleteer of Suffignano, settled in Florence, a gentle, timid, yielding boy, who was gravely industrious. He starts with grinding the colours, sweeping the shop, running errands—becomes the bosom friend of another lad, one *Mariotto Albertinelli*, who is far from industrious or timid or shy—but our industrious apprentice is destined to bring a Venetian warmth of colouring to the Florentine achievement of the fifteen-hundreds, his name Baccio della Porta, to become more famous as Fra Bartolommeo.

FRA BARTOLOMMEO

1475 – 1517

Some thirteen years younger than Piero di Cosimo, but dying before him, was Fra Bartolommeo. There is a tendency in present-day criticism, which is concerning itself far too much with the superficialities of technique, and the

antique-dealer's attitude towards works of art, which indeed is taken to be the *essential* significance of art, rather than with the inner significance of art, to underrate the work of Fra Bartolommeo. He cannot be dismissed as a mere pompous painter of monumental altar-pieces. Bartolommeo was not a poet, say, like Piero di Cosimo; his lack of grip on character hampered his achievement; and the very source of his strength, a sense of dignified composition, largely trended to harden his grouping into a somewhat heavy formula. But he was a forerunner of no mean order. He brought to painting a sense of sculpture and a grip of modelling which are attune to the artistry of Michelangelo, who was born in the same year. But he revealed qualities that had far greater influence upon the Florentine art of the fifteen-hundreds. The art of painting amongst the great Florentines of the fourteen-hundreds—developing through Botticelli, Ghirlandaio, Filippino Lippi—had thrust its innate domain of colour forward to increase of emotional utterance by mellowing the crude qualities of the Byzantine illuminators into harmonies expressed in tones, so that, as with the more tragic exponents of Florentine art, the illusion of *depth* in the picture had been aimed at, giving the sense of the roundness of objects, as though they stood in atmosphere. The Florentines had reached towards this by keen study of the relations of light and shade—called by artists *chiaroscuro*—tentatively it is true, until Leonardo da Vinci came and compelled the painted surface to yield the mysteries of atmosphere by a power of representing by light and shade an almost living quality as though the breath stirred within the figures, bathed in their volume of atmosphere. But Leonardo compelled *chiaroscuro* to the supreme place in rendering the pictured thing; he made colour subordinate to light and shade; and aimed at melting

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colour into this light and shade rather than stating colour in its values as colour. He did not realise the modern vision of the aerial perspective of colour as colour, what one may call the musical utterance of colour against colour that creates colour in distance of its depth.

The first of the Florentines to attempt the use of brilliant colour in the rich harmonies which are the very essence of Venetian painting, was Bartolommeo. He did not achieve to greatness therein ; but at least he essayed it. He struck the new note of the fifteen-hundreds in the Florentine accomplishment.

I have said that Bartolommeo had a marked instinct for the large and rhythmic composition, but it was an instinct heavily qualified and weighted by scientific theories of balance ; and science is ever a hampering burden on the back of instinct in art. It ran to pyramidalisms and the like pomposities. And it created that elaborate scheme of laws, and invented that style, which were afterwards to have so strong an influence on a youth called Raphael, as indeed also were his gaiety of colouring and his rich and golden harmonies.

Bartolommeo also invented the lay figure ; and it is exactly in a certain effect as of lay figures in his art, of a scientific spirit rather than an instinct and emotion dictating his arrangements and the actions of his figures in those arrangements, that Bartolommeo fell short of greatness. Of a nature pliant and sensitive, he was influenced by Leonardo da Vinci, then by Raphael, who was subject to him, then, at the end, making the final effort and failure in attempting to catch the majesty and force of Michelangelo which were wholly alien to the charm of his gracious art. To build sublimity on gentle grace were to break both.

Bartolommeo was a passionate disciple of Savonarola,

of whom he painted two well-known portraits. It was on hearing the Dominican thunders against worldliness and immorality that Bartolommeo gathered together his studies from the nude and burnt them upon the public "pyre of vanities." A monk he was to become, but, strangely enough, neither he nor that other pure and gentle follower of Savonarola, Lorenzo di Credi, had the fire in his art to utter the rage of Savonarola.

OF THE GENTLE SOUL OF HIM WHO CREATED THE LAY FIGURE

Bartolommeo was deeply humiliated by the failure of the monk and his public execution by burning and hanging. On the fall of Savonarola, Bartolommeo retired from the world, entering the Dominican Order, and withdrawing into the convent of S. Marco.

His masterpieces are the Raphaelesque *Madonna, with Saints and Angels*, in the cathedral of Lucca, and the *Virgin appearing to St. Bernard* in the Academy at Florence. Bartolommeo's art is a development far beyond the art of the fourteen-hundreds—he is the connecting link between it and the coming Golden Age.

MARIOTTO ALBERTINELLI (1474-1515), the friend and fellow-worker of Bartolommeo, has largely lost his individuality, swamped in the art of Bartolommeo, perhaps in that he it was who carried out the pictures left incomplete when the friar retired from the world. It is certain that many of Albertinelli's paintings are set down to Bartolommeo; but that he was an artist of power is proved by his serene and masterly *Visitation* at the Uffizi, marked by rare nobility and dignity.

The friendship of these two opposite souls, in boyhood and manhood, is one of the charming pictures of the Renaissance, little given to fidelities. The sweet and gentle spirit of Bartolommeo shines serenely through it all. Bartolommeo early became a disciple of Savonarola, and a

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piagnone; Mariotto Albertinelli, wilful and noisy, was, for the Medici party, a loose liver, an uproarious partisan. He ended by leaving art and becoming an innkeeper. Yet the two ever remained firm friends. Contrast the gentle and timid soul of Bartolommeo, whose weapon drops from his hand at sound of the first onrush of the besiegers upon the convent of S. Marco, vowing to become a monk if heaven should spare him! with the rollicking, swashbuckling tapster Albertinelli.

CHAPTER XVII

OF A DANDIFIED STIGGINS OF VAST HAND'S SKILL

OF A DANDIFIED STIGGINS OF VAST HAND'S SKILL

We must go back for a moment to Piero della Francesca, or Dei Franceschi, whom we saw as pupil to Domenico Veneziano and under the influence of Uccello, and with a keen scientific eagerness for perspective and desire to create *depth* in painting, writing a Treatise on Perspective. Piero dei Franceschi is often classed amongst the Umbrians, but Umbrian he was not by birth or temperament.

Franceschi's teaching brought forth two pupils who were to reach to mastery—Melozzo da Forlì and Luca Signorelli.

Of the life of Melozzo da Forlì (1438-1494) little is known. Born at Forli in the Romagna, he worked at Rome about 1472 for Cardinal Riario, nephew to Pope Sixtus IV., and for him painted frescoes in the church of the SS. Apostoli, of which some fragments remain, now in the sacristy of St. Peter's and on the staircase of the Quirinal; but all such works of his as are known show his mastery of movement and depth of space learnt from Franceschi, and his own personal intensity of emotional statement. Melozzo was made one of the original members of the Academy of St. Luke in Rome, when founded by Pope Sixtus IV.

Of Melozzo da Forlì's pupils was Giovanni Santi (1435 ?-1494), to become the father of the greater Santi, the renowned Raphael; and the prolific painter Marco Palmezzano (1456 ?-1543), the last of the short-lived Romagnoli school.

Franceschi's second and greatest pupil, Luca Signorelli, was to come to wide distinction, and was to have as wide influence.

LUCA SIGNORELLI

1441 – 1523

Luca d'Egidio di Ventura, to be better known to fame as Luca Signorelli, born at Cortona, was apprenticed to Piero dei Franceschi at Arezzo; he became strongly impressed by the art of the brothers Pollaiuoli. Luca Signorelli is—on the tense and dramatic side of the Florentine achievement, as is Botticelli on the spiritual side—intensely moved by the Greek spirit that was overwhelming the Florentine genius—is indeed, perhaps, more really "the reanimate Greek"—for his aim is even more the Greek aim of pure beauty than is Botticelli's; but he adds to it the high Florentine dramatic sense, caught from his Florentine masters.

Cortona is but just without the southern boundary of Tuscany, on the road to Rome; and along that road to Rome the Florentine genius was about to travel in ever-increasing stream, even while Signorelli lived, and in the doing was to come to a sudden ultimate glory, reaching to majestic heights of achievement, thereafter to wither like a garden smitten by the blasting breath of the desert.

Signorelli was to become a master of the nude. His astounding skill in painting the figure and of expressing movement in the nude, from the natural swing of the body to its most violent actions, his wonderful sense of the glow of flesh, and his fascinating sense of rhythm in composition, make him one of the great masters of the Florentine Renaissance.

Of Signorelli's earlier work is the superb *Pan* at Berlin, a masterpiece marked by spaciousness, and a severity almost

as of sculpture. Here we see the type of woman he created —with powerful chin, full forehead, and stern mouth. Signorelli has the dramatic power and tragic sadness of the Florentine genius in great abundance, a fierceness of energy, through which runs a strange tenderness; he has, besides, a feeling for pure beauty and grace more than Florentine. In his frescoes at Orvieto, wrought between 1499 and 1502, he seems to have set himself the task of painting the human body in every conceivable position, as though the problem of movement were his whole aim—a Dantesque desire to state the most violent emotions, they are rated as being of his supreme achievement; the fresco of the *End of the World* produced a profound effect on the art of Michelangelo, in whose fresco of *The Last Judgment*, at the Sistine Chapel in Rome, the influence of Signorelli is most marked.

OF A DANDIFIED STIGGINS OF VAST HAND'S SKILL

Vasari's statement that Signorelli himself painted two frescoes from the *History of Moses* in the Sistine Chapel at Rome has been challenged by modern criticism, which attributes them to Pinturicchio—though Vasari, for all his rambling gossip, is often wonderfully correct. There is no challenge as to Signorelli having painted the frescoes in the Santa Casa of Loreto and the cloisters of Monte Oliveto Maggiore of *Scenes from the Life of St. Benedict.*

Luca Signorelli came to high honour in his native city of Cortona, where he was made a Member of the Council of Eighteen, and held other high offices as Prior, Member of the General Council, Prior of the Fraternity of St. Mark, and Syndic. His later years were lived amidst great affluence and splendour. His mortal remains were laid to rest in Cortona, where he died, in 1523, in his eighty-second year.

Signorelli's mother was sister to Lazzaro, great-grandfather of Giorgio Vasari, the famous chronicler of the lives

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of the Italian artists. He seems to have been a sincere friend, fond of society, and socially ambitious—not above an hypocrisy, ever ready to turn aside enmity with a pretty, sometimes a Stiggins-like compliment. A dandy in his habits, dressing handsomely, he lived in splendour, and his own city and the world at large consequently honoured him.

An iron will and profound sensing were the abundant gifts of Luca Signorelli. His effect on the Florentine achievement was prodigious. His significance in art is the daring and boldness with which he thrust forward the range of utterance of the instrument of painting to express sublime and tragic intensity. He largely forestalled Michelangelo, not only in his expression of the nude, but in his resolute and forceful desire to give utterance to the sublime emotions and the tragic passions in terms of pure form, reckless of the suave qualities of colour. To this grip upon the human figure he bent all his powers—from the graveyard and the gibbet he took subjects for dissection; and his art was as marked for its audacity in seeking into the emotions as was his will in getting subjects for his training. His firm and true line never deserts him. In an age of pedantry and ornamentation he sternly set his great powers to the utterance of mighty tragedies, playing upon the forms of the human body to render the significance of life.

His son, a youth of great personal beauty, whom he greatly loved, being killed in a duel at Cortona, was brought to the grief-stricken father. Signorelli uttered no word of woe or complaint. Without a tear he ordered them to strip the seventeen-years-old lad naked, and, where he lay, he painted him, so that he might have with him always the beauty of his beloved son.

CHAPTER XVIII

OF A GENTLE SOUL INCAPABLE OF TRAGEDY

OF A GENTLE SOUL INCAPABLE OF TRAGEDY

THERE were working together in Verrocchio's workshop in Florence three youths who were destined to become famous as painters—Leonardo da Vinci, Perugino, and Lorenzo di Credi. Of these the least entitled to a great name was Lorenzo di Credi.

LORENZO DI CREDI

1459 – 1537

LORENZO DI CREDI, however, must not be judged by his paintings, which have brought him far higher repute than they ought, for it is almost certain that he must have achieved something approaching the masterpiece in sculpture, since a sculptor of Verrocchio's genius was little likely otherwise to leave instructions in his will that Lorenzo di Credi was to be entrusted with the finishing of his superb equestrian monument of Colleoni at Venice. Unfortunately no sculpture by Lorenzo di Credi has come down to us whereby to judge him. But that, even as a sculptor, Verrocchio estimated his gifts too highly is proved by the fact that the completion of the Colleoni statue was given to Leopardi, Lorenzo being adjudged incompetent to carry it through.

Careful, painstaking, and gifted with a sense of gracefulness, Lorenzo di Credi's paintings are little more than an echo of the religious picture which was becoming a set formality of the studios. One looks in vain for that forceful

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personal note that marks the compelling achievement of the Florence of these years. Lorenzo di Credi neither revealed a personal vision nor won to great accomplishment in craftsmanship—his feeling for form and his powers in uttering colour were neither remarkable nor vigorous nor subtle. About the year 1470 the Flemish (Zeelander) painter, Hugo van der Goes, painted at Bruges for Tommaso Portinari, the agent of the Medici, a huge *Nativity* which Portinari presented to the hospital at Florence. This Flemish work had a very large effect upon the art of Florence; Ghirlandaio, Lorenzo di Credi, and others copied or adapted many of its details. But Lorenzo di Credi's imitative nature could do little more than imitate.

Di Credi assisted his master Verrocchio in the painting of the large *The Madonna with Two Saints* which stands in Pistoia Cathedral. He is seen at his best in his *Annunciation* and his *Adoration of Christ* in the Uffizi, and in the *Nativity* and *Adoration* in the Academy at Florence. His was, like Fra Bartolommeo's, a gentle soul, deeply impressed by Savonarola's fiery preaching, but unable by force or vision to give utterance to the violences of life, its vigours, or its tragedies.

Giovanni Antonio Sogliani (1492-1544) was a pupil and imitator of Lorenzo di Credi.

THE GOLDEN AGE

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CHAPTER XIX

WHEREIN WE MEET THE GIANT OF THE SPRINGTIME OF THE RENAISSANCE

WHEREIN WE MEET THE GIANT OF THE SPRING-TIME OF THE RE-NAISSANCE

Now dawns the Golden Age of the Renaissance—so men label the years. The striving of the Florentine genius to utter itself in painting has brought forth command of the hand over the tools of painting that enables the hand to do what the eye wills. The Florentines bent their will to the mastery of form, above all the human shape. They are mastering *depth*, by perspective of line, and by the aerial perspective, employing light and shadow to give the distance of objects bathed in their varying deeps of atmosphere. Leonardo da Vinci comes and completes that conquest.

It is the habit of the writers to speak of the giants of the Golden Age as being Leonardo da Vinci the Magician of the Age, Raphael the Melodist, Correggio the Fawn, and Michelangelo the Prophet. The tags fit well enough. But Leonardo da Vinci is rather the culmination and supreme genius of the great middle achievement of the Renaissance, its splendid blossom. However, 'tis all somewhat a vain affair and futile—this docketing into classes. The significance of Leonardo lies in this, that in him we are to see one who by his vigorous will, his abounding strength, and the keen inquisitiveness of his age, made his hand facile to state the human form, to yield its sense of

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movement, to place it in the deeps of its surrounding atmosphere, and to envelope it in that mysterious sense of life that is poetry, so that, even as we gaze upon his work it seems to give forth life. For, mark this well, the whole effort of Florence has been to create reality—to compel the sense of vision to utter itself in such consummate fashion that its works of art shall arouse, as fully and completely as skill can do it, the emotion of life in all who behold the pictured surface. The achievement of his hand, like the achievement of all Florence, is to be akin to the vision of the sculptor rather than of the painter—for the essential significance of the painter is colour; and Florence failed in colour—failed, that is to say, to make the hand's skill facile to utter the thing seen in the resonant terms of rhythmic colour.

Until, and to some extent even in, Leonardo da Vinci's skill, there is the feeling of the artist struggling with his skill of hand to utter the music of his vision—the hand does not quite achieve except by dogged labour.

Henceforth the hand's skill is to become more facile, leaps to the eye's desire. Michelangelo employs the significant phrase in one of his sonnets—"the hand obedient to the brain." The hand leaps to utter the artist's desire; the dragging sense of endeavour departs from it. Art conceals art. All that the Florentine genius is capable of doing within the limits of its skill of hand, it is now about to achieve—and in superb fashion.

I repeat: up to, and in a large degree including, the art of Leonardo da Vinci, there is in all Florentine art the sense of toil to create the impression. After Leonardo this sense of labour is flown. There is in Leonardo's art, for all its supreme force, a feeling akin to the century that created him, rather than to the century that followed. And it is

WHEREIN WE MEET THE GIANT OF THE SPRING-TIME OF THE RE-NAISSANCE

for this reason that I would class him as the supreme singer of the springtime of the Renaissance rather than one of the stars of the Golden Age. But the world has ordered otherwise; therefore, so let it be. And, of a truth, the genius of Leonardo da Vinci was so compelling that the inquisition of his profound vision sought out the secrets of the later age—to that age he was a mighty forerunner; and he stands, thereby, straddling like a giant between the two. It was given to only one man of the Golden Age to surpass him in intensity of power and sublimity of conception; yet even Michelangelo was unable to touch some of the chords of Leonardo's astounding art.

LEONARDO DA VINCI

1452 – 1519

We have seen the Florentine genius develop along two paths, side by side. On the one hand, through the fourteen-hundreds, the spiritual and tenderly pietistic art of Fra Angelico passed into the more worldly piety of Fra Lippo Lippi, who went a-courting the beautiful nun, Lucrezia Buti; then Lippo Lippi's pupil, Botticelli, "the reanimate Greek," brought the pagan gods dancing and piping within the precincts of the church, with Ghirlandaio working alongside of him; and Lippo Lippi's love-child, Filippino Lippi, completed the conquest of the great world over the simple faith of the forerunner, Fra Angelico. Then, it will be seen, the goldsmith-painters — since Filippino Lippi, though not a goldsmith, was of them by birth and blood and tradition and training—largely wrought out the pietistic development of Florentine art that aimed at beauty.

On the other hand, the tragic and sombre realism that Donatello and Masaccio created, wrought out the Florentine

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spirit on its realistic side in broad and majestic fashion, with fearless eyes for the truth, and realising ugliness as well as beauty to be a significance; seeing life more whole, and not flinching from it. From Masaccio and Donatello, through Andrea dal Castagno and Domenico Veneziano and Uccello, and Dei Franceschi, the tragic flame was handed on to the brothers Pollaiuoli, who as goldsmiths had turned their eyes to the sculptured form of the human nude, from whom the tradition passed to their pupil Verrocchio, likewise pupil to Donatello, whose superb equestrian statue of Gattamelata in bronze at Padua this Verrocchio rivalled with his famed equestrian statue of the *condottiere* Colleoni at Venice—two amongst the greatest works of man's hands.

In Verrocchio's painting was knit together something of the two Florentine temperaments in art and in life; and it was fitting that out of Verrocchio's studio should come the youth who was still further to knit together her full significance, as he was also to create in his own person the sculpture and the painting of his century, gathering together, as unto a mighty flowering, the sap and tree of that century as Leonardo da Vinci.

LEONARDO DA VINCI was to express in his art, as he held in his genius, the full significance of his age—the triumphs of the scientific spirit of the Renaissance that arose to full honour under the mantle of the church. Over all that he wrought is the inscrutable smile of the Sphinx, the eternal question of the significance of life. Did he solve it? For answer we can only turn to that baffling, questioning smile. Here is the Renaissance stated in terms of Art.

In the realm of colour he was not the greatest painter of Italy of the fourteen-hundreds; but in his complete utterance as artist his achievement is prodigious. All that

had gone before, all that was being wrought about him, he made his own; and his hand gave forth the impression of a vigorous and keen brain that saw, and of a quick inquisitive temperament that felt, the mystery of the miracle of Reality and its oneness with Spirituality. He employed colour with the prodigious restraint that was a part of all his restless, feverish activity—he employed it but to enhance the harmony of his deeply conceived impressions of things, so that it becomes resonant and deeply musical, compelling the eyes to the deeps of what he saw and felt. It is rather in the vibrant atmosphere which he creates about his figures, chiefly by a consummate employment of light and shade (what is called *chiaroscuro*, or the blackness and whiteness of darkness and light), so that his line and form lose their linear classical aim, that Leonardo moves the craftsmanship of art forward towards its vaster powers of impressionism; that is to say, by the employment of masses in their relation to each other, he becomes the forerunner of a mighty advance in artistry. He was too steeped in, too much a child of, his age, wholly to rid himself of its exquisite classical sense of the rhythm of line; but his inquisitive and keen searching eyes had beheld in sculpture the play of light and shade upon the surfaces, giving the living sense of movement and mystery; and he bent all his compelling genius to create by draughtsmanship and painting this illusion of life upon the painted object, held in the play of atmosphere. There is revealed by his art at once a power never before known in painting; but for which the age of Praxiteles had striven in ancient Greece—the effort to express the subtlety of life in the painted flesh.

WHEREIN WE MEET THE GIANT OF THE SPRING-TIME OF THE RENAISSANCE

He who gazes at the all too rare masterpieces of Leonardo da Vinci will be touched by the sense of this subtle movement, as though the objects painted on the flat

THE GOLDEN AGE

surface were in a deep mirror, stirring and looming and rhythmic as though they were attune to sound, affecting the senses like some haunting music. Botticelli's exquisite sense of line and colour have vanished into lineless massing that holds an intensity of life and moves in one's senses as though the breath stirred their surfaces. Not only have we now the height and width of a flat decorated surface; not only the depth of vision of things seen as though in a mirror; but a strange subtlety of atmosphere that surrounds each living thing.

In the mid-century of the fourteen-hundreds, 1452, Leonardo da Vinci was born, as his name tells us, in the little village of Vinci, set high on the top of a hill amidst the hills that lie by Empoli in the valley of the Arno. He was one of the world's great illegitimates. The natural son of Ser Piero, a notary of Vinci—this Ser Piero's forefathers had been notaries for four generations before him—and of one Caterina, who afterwards married Accattabriga di Piero del Vaccha of Vinci, he is first mentioned as being five years of age in a taxation return made in 1457 by his grandfather, Antonio da Vinci; nor is his birth likely to have been recorded with elaborate care. This grandfather seems to have been a true gentleman, for the boy was brought up and educated in his house; and the father seems to have had the boy legitimised in his early youth. This Ser Piero was much given to marrying as well as to affairs of the heart, for he was four times a bridegroom, and by his third and fourth wives had eleven lawful children—which probably caused considerable friction in youth for Leonardo.

In youth his personal beauty was renowned, his speech fascinating, and his charm of manner as remarkable. Of such prodigious strength that he could bend an iron ring or

XVII

LEONARDO DA VINCI

1452 – 1519

FLORENTINE AND MILANESE SCHOOLS

"THE VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS"

(National Gallery)

The Virgin kneels amid flowers beneath dark basaltic rocks. She places her right hand on the shoulder of St. John the Baptist; her left held out in benediction over the Infant Christ seated on the ground beside an angel.

Painted on wood, arched at the top. 6 ft. $0\frac{1}{2}$ in. h. × 3 ft. $9\frac{1}{2}$ in. w. (1·841 × 1·155).

horse-shoe with his fingers, his touch was so delicate that he was famed for his mastery of the lute. He composed music, wrote sonnets. His researches into science and art were profound; his philosophy forestalled most modern thought—he stated Will as the energy of life. He lifted the veil from many secrets of science. Yet, the pursued object once discovered, he seemed content, and passed to other things. The only portrait known of Leonardo was painted in his old age, and gives small hint of the splendid physique of the man.

WHEREIN WE MEET THE GIANT OF THE SPRING-TIME OF THE RE-NAISSANCE

At eighteen, in 1470, Leonardo joined the studio of the sculptor-painter Andrea del Verrocchio, where he was to meet gentle Lorenzo di Credi, genial Botticelli, and scoundrelly Perugino. His abundant and astounding genius soon revealed itself; and he early surpassed his master in painting. It was whilst Verrocchio was at work on his *Baptism of Christ*, to-day at the Academy in Florence, that Leonardo, as we have seen, was set to paint one of the angels; and Verrocchio was so astonished at the power and the gifts displayed by his pupil that he straightway vowed never again to take brush in hand.

Leonardo's twentieth year, 1472, saw his name enrolled in the Company of Painters in Florence; and small wonder, since he painted about that time the little *Assumption* now at the Louvre, long attributed to Lorenzo di Credi.

The 31st of December 1479 was the day of the public execution of Bernardo Bandini for his part in the slaying of Giuliano de' Medici during High Mass in Florence Cathedral, when Lorenzo so narrowly escaped—the attempt at the destruction of the house of the Medici known as the Pazzi Conspiracy. Leonardo da Vinci made a fine drawing of Bandini, dated upon that day.

This also was the year of Leonardo's unfinished *St.*

Jerome in the Desert, now at the Vatican, which Cardinal Fesch found, part being used as a box-lid in a shop in Rome, and the other part in a shoemaker's shop some time afterwards.

The unfinished cartoon of *The Adoration of the Magi* at the Uffizi was done for the monks of S. Donato at Scopeto in Leonardo's twenty-eighth year (1480).

It was about his thirtieth year, in 1482 or 1483, that Leonardo da Vinci's restless and untiring spirit caused him to turn his eyes towards Milan, then the most important and magnificent Court in the north; and he started on that fateful series of moves that were to have so profound an effect on Italy and France; and to narrow perhaps the wide creation that should have been the fruit of his vast energy and intellect.

To Milan then he went, about 1482, to enter the service of Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan, as scientist, architect, sculptor, painter, military engineer, or what-you-will; and in Milan he made his restless home for close on seventeen of the best years of his life, until in his forty-seventh year, 1499, on the edge of the fifteen-hundreds, he returned to Florence. Those seventeen years in Milan were strenuous years of unbounded energy and achievement in almost every intellectual and artistic and scientific activity. The vast range of his interests and his work is well-nigh incredible. In his thirtieth year, with full knowledge of his great powers, and no mean estimate of them, his abilities to carry out his wide-ranging talents were unbounded. The field of his industry and endeavour was limitless. To every activity of the human understanding, so far as learning had then developed these activities, he turned his keen eyes, increasing the aim, and thrusting forward the outposts and enlarging the conquest and domain of each.

XVIII

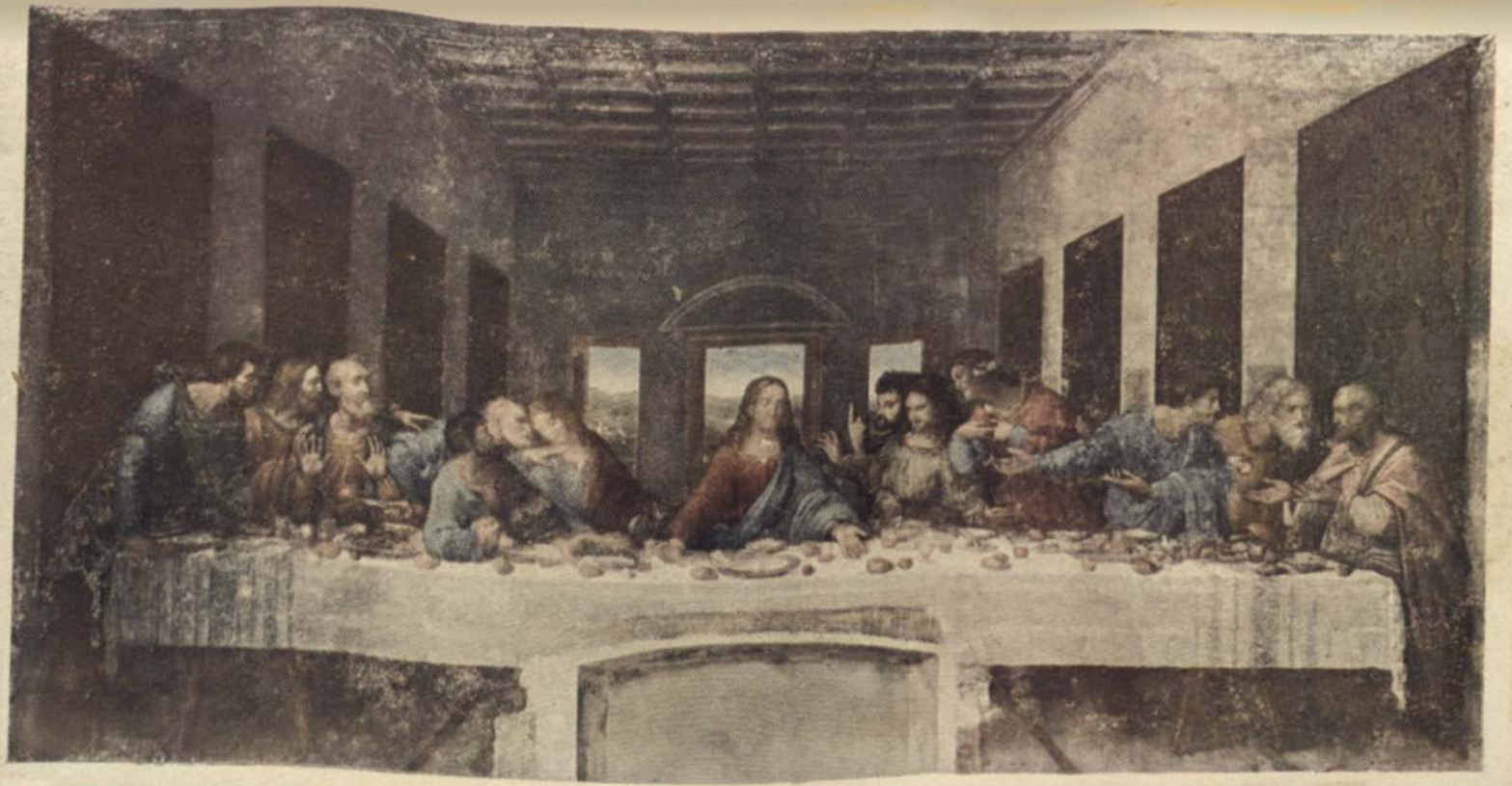
LEONARDO DA VINCI

1452 – 1519

"THE LAST SUPPER"

Refectory of St. Maria delle Grazie, Milan. This, the world-reputed masterpiece upon which Leonardo da Vinci's fame chiefly rests, was painted in oils upon a stucco ground, which caused its rapid decay. The monks pierced the lower part with a doorway; and Napoleon's cavalry, stabled in the Refectory, came wellnigh to ending it.

About 13 ft. 8 in. h. × 26 ft. 7 in. w. (4·16 × ′ 09).



XIX

LEONARDO DA VINCI

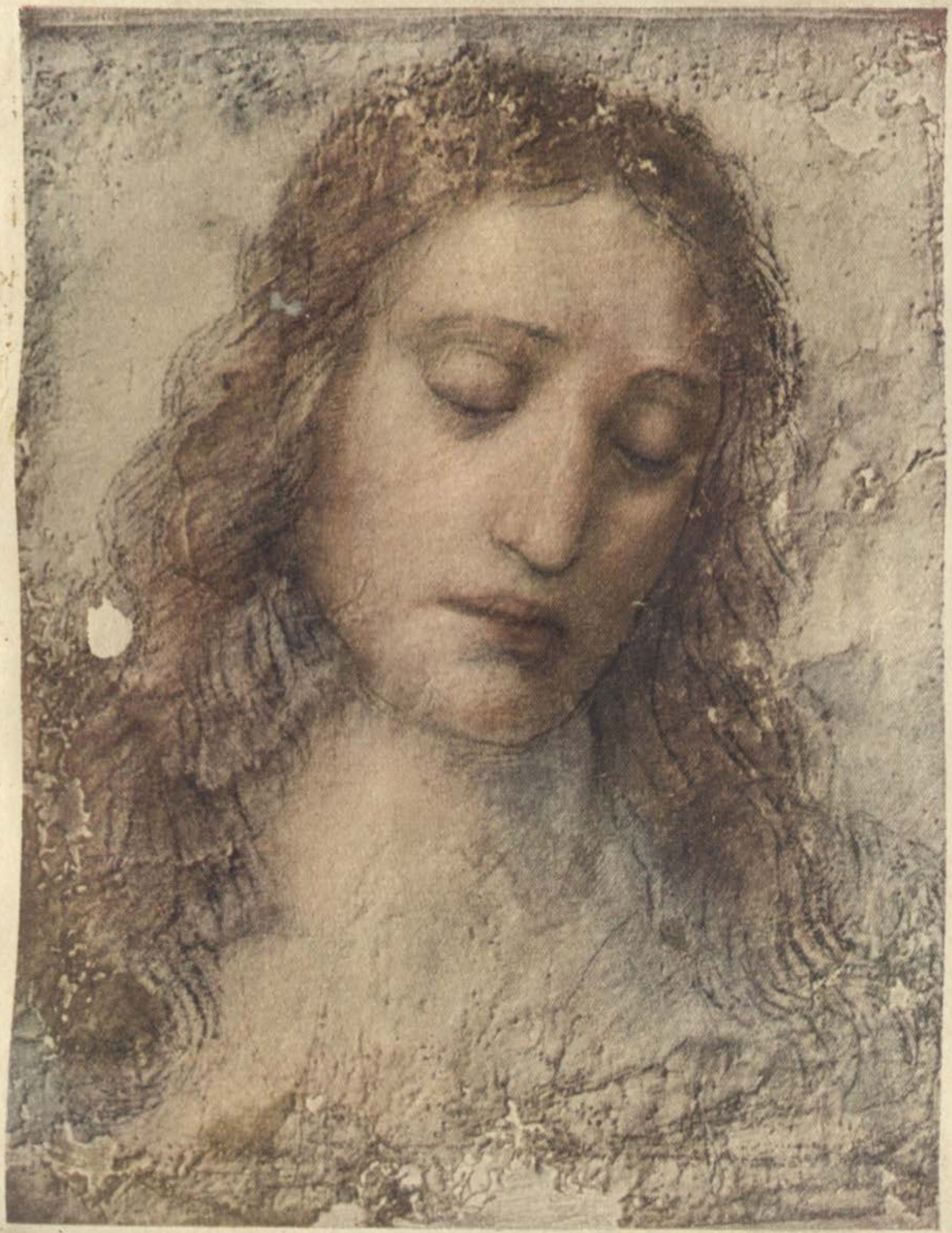
1452 – 1519

"THE HEAD OF CHRIST"

IN THE BRERA GALLERY (MILAN)

This, the wonderful study made by Leonardo for his great masterpiece of *The Last Supper*, reveals him as pure poet.

1 ft. c½ in. × 1 ft. 4 in. (0·32 × 0·40).



OF PAINTING

WHEREIN WE MEET THE GIANT OF THE SPRING-TIME OF THE RE-NAISSANCE

Leonardo, in his letter to Sforza of Milan giving the list of services that he would render to any potentate, with no shy or uncertain estimate of his worth, does not set himself down as artist above all, but as scientist. Nor were his gifts greater in artistry, whether of design or painting or sculpture or music, whether in that mighty activity of architecture that is science and art united, than was his astonishing knowledge of engineering, geology, mathematics, the science of war and the engines of war, or in human anatomy and in worldly philosophy. His writings on the theory and practice of art are profound. He could find time, amid prodigious intellectual pursuits such as might have wearied a score of great brains, to plan and design the Court pageants of the Duke of Milan. And to the invention of a flying-machine he brought his untiring genius with dogged insistence. His restless and active imagination dreamed no vague dreams; the cunning of his hands, above all of his wonderful left hand, itched ever to bring to reality the prodigious schemings of his scientific and practical brain.

Leonardo could scarce have settled in Milan when he began to paint in oils his famous *La Vierge aux Rochers*—"the Virgin of the Rocks"—the work of 1482, his thirtieth year. The painting remained in Milan some twelve years, when, about 1494, it was sold to the king of France. A petition was presented to the Duke of Milan by the artists Ambrogio da Predis and Leonardo da Vinci, "the Florentine," begging him to be judge of a dispute that had broken out between the aforesaid artists on the one side, and the Brotherhood of the Conception at S. Francesco in Milan on the other, as to the moneys to be paid for "a picture in oils of the Madonna." This painting is held to be the

Vierge aux Rochers, to-day in the Louvre; the which Leonardo da Vinci had painted some ten years earlier, in 1482, as we have seen. At the same time, it is difficult to see why Ambrogio da Predis should have been mixed up in the squabble, unless he too had had a hand in the painting of the Louvre picture. However that may be, the picture is said to have been sold about 1495 for the amount demanded by the painters to another buyer, supposed to have been acting for the king of France. The two artists then wrought another version of this Vierge aux Rochers, the *Virgin of the Rocks*, reputed to have been painted by Ambrogio da Predis under the guidance of Leonardo da Vinci for the smaller price which the Brotherhood were ready to pay, to be set up in the Chapel of the Conception. This picture was brought to England some three hundred years later by Gavin Hamilton in 1777, who sold it to the then Marquess of Lansdowne, by whom it was exchanged for another picture at Charlton Park, in Wiltshire, belonging to the Earl of Suffolk, from whom it was bought by the National Gallery for nine thousand pounds in 1880.

The differences between the Louvre version of the *Vierge aux Rochers* and the National Gallery *Virgin of the Rocks* in general arrangement are so slight as to prove that one is at least an intended replica of the other; but in spite of the fact that the Louvre painting, if by Leonardo, is obviously earlier and less mature than the London *Virgin of the Rocks*, considerable doubt must hang about the greater claim to authentic certainty as regards the Louvre picture. We have seen that Ambrogio da Predis was partner in Leonardo's appeal concerning the payment for it, the which establishes da Predis's handiwork upon the Louvre picture for a certainty. It may be that both paintings were wrought by the two painters. But not a doubt can remain in the

XX

LEONARDO DA VINCI

1452 – 1519

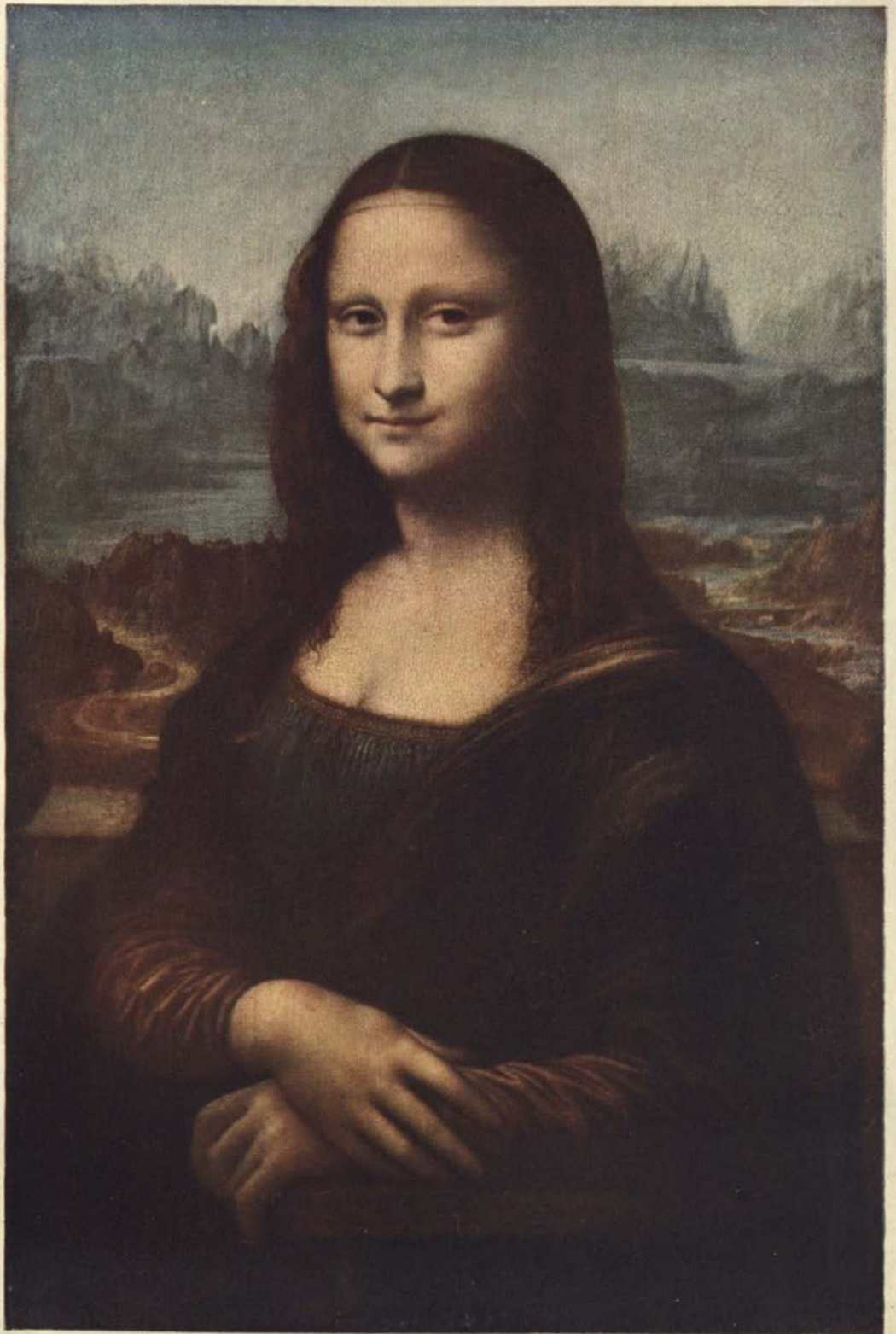
FLORENTINE SCHOOL

"MONA LISA"
(La Joconde)

(LOUVRE)

The portrait of Lisa di Anton Maria di Noldo Gherardini, third wife of Francesco di Bartolommeo de Zenobi del Giocondo. This picture is world-renowned for the sphinx-like smile of Mona Lisa.

Painted in tempera on panel, and restored in oil. 2 ft. 6½ in. × 1 ft. 9 in. (0·79 × 0·53).



mind of such as have a real sense of art, that the *Virgin of the Rocks* is by far the more profound work of genius. And if Ambrogio da Predis only worked upon it under Leonardo's guidance, then Ambrogio da Predis must be acclaimed the greater artist. There can be no shadow of doubt that the *Virgin of the Rocks* is in greater and most important part the work of Leonardo da Vinci; and, not only so, but it is about his supreme achievement in painting that has come down to us. The dozen years or so of difference in the time of the creation of the two masterpieces would account for the enormous increase of power revealed in the *Virgin of the Rocks*—if Leonardo chiefly painted it. There are unimportant details in the picture which, by their comparative weakness of handling, may admit of Ambrogio da Predis's workmanship, though even these are open to grave question. That the gilt halos, the cross of the little Baptist, and certain retouchings on the left hand of the Virgin, the right arm of the child Christ, and the forehead of the little St. John the Baptist, are not Leonardo's original handiwork, may be likely enough. But the masterly arrangement of the whole scheme, the profound harmony with which it is uttered, giving forth the resounding orchestration of light and shade as of majestic musical sounds, the haunting melody of the piece created by the subtle play of light and shadow upon the features and figures which create a sense as of moving living things, the wondrous impressionism aroused by the massing of these lights and shadows, the vibrant depth of the landscape, and the almost awful reverence of the exquisite simple protecting love of motherhood for childhood, for all its tender passion, holding a tragic threat even whilst that sphinx-like smile wreathes the lips of mother and guardian angel, all this vast gamut of the sensed emotions that are roused in the

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THE GOLDEN AGE

presence of this wondrously destined Child as Son of God, and of the tragic destiny that stands in the deep shadows of the rocks for that Mother, are stated with a dramatic intensity that the art of painting heretofore had never approached, and has never surpassed. The naïve, simple faith of an earlier church has departed, the elaborate paganised Christianity of Florence of the fourteen-hundreds is swept aside, and a man has arisen who sees in the great world-story a compelling and dramatic significance that has an intensity that is Greek in its inevitable tragedy, but giving forth a philosophy of which Greece knew nothing, which even the Italy of his own day is unable to understand.

There, on the stroke of 1500, the republic of Florence has brought forth a man who rises above the mere worldly ambitions and mere social success that rack the age, who leaps from one endeavour to another, reckless of the accumulation of mere wealth, bent only on so exercising his vast gifts that he may move forward to largest experience of life and enable mankind, by the wizardy of his art, to partake of that vaster emotional experience.

And this intense and eager gaze wherewith he saw life, with all its subtlety, balked at every step by all its baffling enigma, all this keen sense of the profundity of life and created things, he bent his whole powers to express in his art. He was not content to make of painting a beautiful decorative design; he compelled all his intense powers to the passionate endeavour to make his art reveal the mystic significance of things—he essayed to realise the type and character and significance of everything. He was not content merely to range the realm of colour in order to play elaborate five-fingered exercises in it; he but employed it as part of a great whole, as no more important, nor less important, than the play of light and shade, than form

and depth and space and arrangement, to utter forth the profound sense of life. He used painting with plastic power, as though to unite the strength of sculptured forms with it. He created a style, bending all the crafts to it, so that they would but give forth the music that was in him.

WHEREIN WE MEET THE GIANT OF THE SPRING-TIME OF THE RE-NAISSANCE

From the year 1483, being thirty-one, to 1487, all record, gossip, and report of him are silent throughout Italy; and the silence lends force to the tradition that he went abroad to the East as engineer in the service of the Sultan of Egypt. To Milan he came back in his thirty-fifth year, and by 1490 was writing his *Treatise on Painting*, getting to work again also on the famed colossal equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza in plaster, which was set up in Milan, but was destined never to be completed in bronze; for it was never cast in metal, owing to the disasters that fell, as out of the blue, upon Milan in 1500, when, in the April of 1500, after the defeat of Ludovico, then Duke of Milan, at the battle of Novara, the French bowmen brought down the plaster figure in ruins.

But before these black days were to fall on Milan and send Leonardo packing, he was at work upon the huge painting on which his greatest fame as a painter rests—the world-reputed masterpiece of *The Last Supper*. Painted in oils upon the stucco surface of the wall of the Refectory in the Dominican Convent of S. Maria delle Grazie at Milan, Leonardo put the last touch of his brush upon it in 1498, his forty-sixth year. The use of oil upon a stucco ground caused the rapid decay of the great work within a couple of generations of its painting; and neglect and ill-use—the monks damaged the lower part by piercing it with the top of a doorway through the wall; and Napoleon's cavalry, being stabled in the Refectory against his strict orders,

pelted dirt at the heads of the figures—came well-nigh to ending it. Yet the splendid ghost of it remains. A copy, the size of the original, now in the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy at Burlington House, said to have been painted by Marco d'Oggiono, one of Leonardo's pupils, gives with crude sense of colour and form some poor idea of it. But the ghost of what it once was, where it is still to be seen in Milan, holds far more hint of the original. The composition yields a sense of grandeur, and the whole is instinct with dramatic and tragic intensity. It is told of Leonardo that the prior of the convent, complaining to Ludovico Sforza that the artist was idling over the fresco, Leonardo silenced him by threatening to paint the prior's portrait into the face of Judas. How the painting has escaped its many vicissitudes—it was long used for storing hay, and has been flooded more than once—is a marvel. In detail it must have contained superb qualities. The study for the *Head of the Christ* at the Brera in Milan reveals the intense dramatic insight and astounding faculty for character, the supreme grip in the creation of types fitted to express the idea, and the exquisite poetic vision of Leonardo da Vinci in consummate fashion.

Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan, had married the fifteen-year-old Beatrice d'Este in 1491. The extravagant girl refused to wear a certain handsome gown of woven gold — she possessed eighty-four — which Ludovico had given to her, if Cecilia Gallerani wore hers, which was exactly like it, and which Ludovico had given to the fair charmer. Ludovico gave up both the beauty and her gown, getting the lady married off to Count Ludovico Bergamini within a year of his own marriage with Beatrice d'Este. But Milan's eyes got wandering again full soon; and five years later, in 1496, Ludovico Sforza was deeply enamoured

WHEREIN WE MEET THE GIANT OF THE SPRING-TIME OF THE RE-NAISSANCE

of Duchess Beatrice's lady-in-waiting, Lucrezia Crevelli. Leonardo painted Lucrezia Crevelli's picture, but it is certainly not the portrait attributed to him in the Louvre.

However, Beatrice d'Este's jealousies were near at an end. On the 2nd of the January of 1497, after spending three hours in prayer in the Church of S. Maria delle Grazie, which Leonardo's *Last Supper* adorns, she gave birth that night to a still-born child, and a few hours later breathed her last. It made Ludovico a changed man; broken with grief, he visited her tomb every day.

But stormy days were coming for Milan. In the September of 1499 Ludovico left Milan for the Tyrol to raise an army against the French invasion; in his absence, on the 14th of the month, Bernardino di Corte sold the city to the French; Louis XII. entered it in triumph on the 6th of October—the French holding the city for twelve years.

By some strange chance, the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy also possesses Leonardo's fine cartoon for his *Virgin and Child with St. Anne and St. John*, upon which he wrought in the autumn of 1499, destined therefore to be the last work of his hands in Milan; for the Duke Ludovico had to flee the city, into which Louis XII. of France made his triumphant entry.

Leonardo had hurriedly left Milan also, and the spring of 1500 saw him at Mantua, where he met Isabella d'Este, the beautiful sister of the dead Beatrice—his portrait of her in chalk is now at the Louvre.

Leonardo went from Mantua to Venice; thence, about the Easter of 1500, back to Florence. The cartoon which he made for his second *Virgin and Child with Saint Anne* in the April of 1501 has vanished; but the oil painting is now at the Louvre, said to show also the partnership of a pupil.

THE GOLDEN AGE

It was soon after his return to Florence that Leonardo began to paint his world-famous *Mona Lisa*, the third wife of Francesco del Giocondo, hence its name *La Joconde*. We have Vasari's gossip for it, that Leonardo "loitered over the picture for four years," and that "whilst he was painting the portrait, Leonardo took the precaution to keep some one ever near her, to sing or play on instruments, or to jest and otherwise amuse her, to the end that she might continue cheerful." The haunting smile of Mona Lisa, and her intent rapt gaze as of one listening to music, were caught and fixed with all the mature skill and wizardry of Leonardo's genius. The picture, after its many and merciless cleanings, remains a ghost of its once self; yet what a wondrous and haunting ghost it is!

But during its painting Leonardo did many things. He visited Umbria, acting as engineer and architect to Cesare Borgia.

The pedant critics, straining every masterpiece into their eternal cult of beauty, label her as beautiful. Well; 'tis an affair of taste, and matters little! It is far greater and more compelling than mere beauty. Its strange and haunting sense of life—one can hear the breath stirring in the languorous body, feel the peculiar charm of the sphinx-like smile—its complete immersion in the atmosphere that holds the figure, make it one of the supreme works of man's hand.

The *Mona Lisa* was bought by Francis I. of France, and remained in the possession of the kingly house of France, until it passed to the French nation, one of the most precious possessions of the Louvre.

In the January of 1504, the year he finished the *Mona Lisa*, being fifty-two, Leonardo was called as one of the jury of artists by the Signoria of Florence to settle the site for

THE SO-CALLED SCHOOL OF MILAN

DONATELLO, the Florentine, influences the Paduan SQUARCIONE
whose pupil FOPPA, 1427–1502
went to Milan and
founded a school.

BORGOGNONE; 1450–1523 — BUTINONE; — ZENALE; — SUARDI 1450–1526 who afterwards went to BRAMANTE to become known as BRAMANTINO

LEONARDO DA VINCI, the Florentine, goes to Milan, and trains or influences

GIANPETRINO — MARCO D'OGGIANO 1470–1530 — SOLARIO 1460–1515 — AMBROGIO DE PREDIS 1459–1557 — BERNARDINO DA CONTI (pupil of Foppa) — CESARE DA SESTO 1477–1523 — BOLTRAFFIO 1467–1516 — GAUDENZIO FERRARI 1470?–1546 — BAZZI called Sodoma 1477–1549 — LUINI pupil of Borgognone 1475–1532

CESARE MAGNI — Bernardino Lanini 1511–1581

the setting up of Michelangelo's great statue of *David*; and about the same time he was given the decoration of one of the walls of the Council Hall at the Palazzo Vecchio, for which he took as subject a *Skirmish between the Florentine and Milanese troops at Anghiari*, which had taken place in 1440, some sixty years before. He made the magnificent cartoon, but finding the oil-paint impossible on the plaster ground, after working upon it for eight months he abandoned it in despair. The cartoon, as long as it existed, roused the enthusiastic admiration of Florence, and was said to have been one of his supreme achievements in art; but of it we can only now judge by some of his original studies.

WHEREIN WE MEET THE GIANT OF THE SPRING-TIME OF THE RE-NAISSANCE

In his fifty-fourth year, 1506, he was back in Milan, now in the service of the French king; but 1507 drew him to Florence again to defend a lawsuit; the next year, 1508, he was again in Milan.

It was in 1516, in his sixty-fourth year, that the ageing and vigorous painter was persuaded by Francis I. of France, victor of Marignano, to go with him to France on a princely income; and he never looked upon the land of his own people again. It was in these last years that he drew the only portrait of himself, as an old man, that has come down to us. Three years afterwards, on the 2nd of the May of 1519, at his residence in Cloux, near Amboise, by Tours, his restless spirit passed away—just forty-five years before the birth of Shakespeare.

It has been claimed that in that mighty passing, there departed the greatest intellect the world has ever seen. Leonardo da Vinci was not wholly that, prodigious as was his genius. He was not the world's greatest artist, stupendous master though he was; nor its greatest thinker, powerful thinker though he was; nor its greatest scientist. Yet, when

THE GOLDEN AGE

all his vast gifts are summed together, and set in one man's being, he stands forth a very giant. Sovereign master of Sentiment he was not; sovereign master of Thought he was not; sovereign master of Beauty he certainly was not. But sovereign of a profound and prodigious achievement he was, which perhaps was as great as these.

Embarrassing his teachers in childhood by profound mathematics beyond their solving, by the time he reached manhood he was the finest master of anatomy in Italy. Inventing machinery for water-mills and aqueducts; making engines of war; discovering the conical rifle-bullet; making the paddle-wheel for boats; conducting deep researches into optics; an architect, he raised churches and buildings; an engineer, he planned the piercing of mountains by tunnels, the connecting of rivers by canals; there was scarce a region of science that he did not master. He forestalled Copernicus's theory of the movement of the earth; Lamarck's classification of animals into vertebrate and invertebrate—the laws of gravitation, of friction, of heat, of light; he discovered steam as a motive force in navigation, magnetic attraction, the use of the stone-saw, the circulation of the blood; he invented canals, breech-loading cannon, the wheelbarrow, the swimming-belt, the composition of explosives, the smoke-stack, and the mincing-machine. Gifted with prodigious patience, unflagging industry, he never allowed his quickness of surmise to be content without practical test.

Over all he wrought he wrote that inscrutable smile, sphinx-like, that baffles us in our survey of the man himself.

And of all his profound insight into life, perhaps the most profound result of his deep inquisitions was his discovery that art is not beauty. He found that art was the

WHEREIN WE MEET THE GIANT OF THE SPRING-TIME OF THE RE-NAISSANCE

utterance of the emotions. "Tears," said he, "come from the heart, not from the brain." Sensitive to beauty as he was—he would walk the streets of Florence and of Milan learning a beautiful face by heart, then home and set it down on paper—but not for its mere beauty of the flesh, seeking rather to search its emotional significance, its character, its spiritual essence. But with equal inquisition he sought to utter the significance of ugliness. He assailed the habit of painters in isolating the human figure from landscape; he had a profound feeling for the oneness of nature and of life. "The eye," said he, "is the window of the soul."

He is in many ways the supreme spirit of the Renaissance—he had unlimited passion for discovery.

But, for Leonardo, mere discovery was not enough; it had to be based on mastery of detail. In painting he essayed to realise the completeness on the painted surface of that which was mirrored in the eye and created the impression on the senses. All the advances in craftsmanship to his day—chemistry of colours, science of composition, perspective, the illusion created by light and shadow, he perfected and thrust forward to mighty achievement. The *Virgin of the Rocks* holds it completely. To deceive the eye to the utmost became, as it was the aim of all Florentine art from the beginning, his goal. But he knew that impression, not imitation, created the work of art. Look upon the supreme works of art before Leonardo da Vinci, then upon his hand's skill—see with what astounding draughtsmanship his drawing of a lip, of the curve of a cheek, of the hardness of a rock, the limpid deeps of atmosphere, are rendered! How the rest falls back into mere effort by contrast! How his profound love of life and all living things comes forth! This great powerful,

THE GOLDEN AGE

handsome giant would buy birds in the market-place that he might let them go.

Oddly enough, Leonardo was left-handed, and wrote from right to left. He spent himself remorselessly—on discovering flight for man, on puzzles, on making flat corks wherewith to walk on the waters; always for Leonardo the Riddle of the Universe.

His achievement is a vast multitude of incomplete endeavour. He would make vast preparations, and complete nothing. So that men cried out upon him that he could not complete. The Prior of S. Maria delle Grazie bitterly complained that Leonardo would stand gazing for days at the fresco upon which he should have been at work, and for weeks would not come near it. He had ever the quick retort to an accusation, "The man of genius works most when his hands are idle."

The fourteen-hundreds came to an end in a sea of cynicism and doubt—men's eyes bent on material things. Turning his back to it all, Leonardo stands out, seeking to solve the infinite. He detested convention—the established and completed thing. In his *Last Supper* he flings aside the timidities, flings away the halos of the apostles; takes instead a dramatic moment—the moment when Christ announces, "One of you shall betray me"; makes it dramatic; makes each apostle a human character; and, in the doing, for the first time in Italian art, creates a beautiful head of the Christ.

"Miserable men," wrote Leonardo, "how often do you enslave yourselves to gain money." He put will and freedom of the individual above all things.

XXI

LUINI

1475?–1532

"THE MYSTIC MARRIAGE OF ST. CATHERINE"

IN THE BRERA (MILAN)

The Child Christ may be seen placing the ring upon the finger of St Catherine.

CHAPTER XX

WHEREIN WE SEE THE MIGHTY GENIUS OF LEONARDO DA VINCI CREATE THE SCHOOL OF MILAN

WHEREIN WE SEE THE MIGHTY GENIUS OF LEONARDO DA VINCI CREATE THE SCHOOL OF MILAN

LEAVING all that was mortal of the dead Leonardo da Vinci in France, to return to the Florence that bred him, it were well to stay our feet at Milan on the southward journeying, and gaze on the large endeavour that essayed to create the art of what is known as the Milanese School, under the magic sway of Leonardo, therefore but a part of the achievement of Florence.

Leonardo was a very Florentine, created by the spirit of Florence, the consummation of her genius in the fourteen-hundreds. Yet he created the greater part of his art, realised the fulness of his genius, outside Florence ; and it was in Milan that he came to his supreme fulfilment. Over Milan he cast all the glamour of his renown. His colossal personality dominated Milan, and was to cast its atmosphere over Florence, but over Milan he stood a very giant, and Lombardy grew to claim him as her own.

It is usual for writers to begin a dissertation upon the so-called School of Lomdardy, or of Milan, by vaunting it against the schools of Padua or Verona. As a matter of fact, what little school there was before Leonardo da Vinci made it but a part of the Florentine achievement, came out of Padua, the cradle of Venetian painting. Out of the famous Paduan school of Squarcione came a pupil to found a school of Milan, and known to fame as Foppa.

FOPPA

1427?–1502

The founder of the so-called Milanese School of Painting, at any rate the head of the school, when Leonardo da Vinci came to the splendid Court of Ludovico il Moro, Duke of Milan, was one VINCENZO FOPPA, whose art was founded upon that of the antique-loving SQUARCIONE, creator of the great school of Padua—Squarcione, collector of antiques, who was largely instrumental in creating the academic desire to copy antique art. Lombardy, 'tis true, had had her primitives before Foppa, mere mediocrities of Giottesques, yet, by reason of their being Giottesques, steeped in the Florentine atmosphere of Tuscany rather than what one might have expected, the rich-hued art of neighbouring Venice to their immediate east, strangely enough, since the Venetians were of the north, and separated as were the Lombards, from middle Italy by Italy's backbone of the Apennines.

Foppa was a fine colourist, and his art showed wide advance on the Milanese painters of his day, seeking to state atmospheric values in silvery harmonies instead of the more pattern-like employment of colours in spaced masses. In his later years he had the advantage of seeing the work of the great architect Bramante, who was also a painter, and had come to Milan out of Tuscany, still further bending the Milanese taste towards Florentine ideals in artistry. Bramante's chief fame is as architect, and his artistry is rather revealed through the genius of his follower Bramantino than by any of the very rare paintings by his own hand that have survived.

Foppa painted a large number of frescoes in Milan and its neighbourhood, but they have perished. The National

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Gallery in London has, however, a large panel, the *Adoration of the Magi*, by him, which is an important painting long attributed to Bramantino, but now considered as characteristic of Foppa.

Foppa's pupil, Ambrogio da Fossano, better known as BORGOGNONE (born about 1450 and dying in 1523), showed also the subtle sense of cool, grey harmonies, and his art has the distinction that comes of deep spirituality and tenderness, wrought with a sense of beauty.

Foppa and Borgognone both, in the fulness of their powers, fell under the wizardry of Leonardo da Vinci's commanding genius. Borgognone's greatest works are to be seen in Milan and Pavia. His greatest pupil was Bernardino Luini.

Another pupil of Foppa who came to distinction was BARTOLOMMEO SUARDI (1450-1526 ?), who afterwards went to the great architect and painter Bramante, whence he came to be known by the name of BRAMANTINO. His art sometimes rises to great heights, but he was a most unequal painter. On Leonardo da Vinci's departure from Milan in 1499, it was Bramantino who most influenced the further achievement of Milan, and both his pupil Gaudenzio Ferrari and Luini owed heavy tribute to him. Unfortunately, his frescoes at the Vatican were destroyed by order of Pope Julius II., to make way for Raphael.

Others of Foppa's pupils who came to repute were VINCENZO CIVERCHIO of Crema, BERNARDINO DE' CONTI of Pavia, BERNARDINO BUTTINONE, and BERNARDO ZENALE.

Of MACRINO D'ALBA little is known, except that he was painting in Milan when Foppa was the great painter of the city; a few of the works of his hand are to be seen in Alba, his native town, in the Certosa of Pavia, and in Turin.

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ANDREA DA SOLARIO, born about 1460, and dying in 1515 (who, by the way, must not be confounded with Antonio da Solario, more famous as Lo Zingaro), was born at Solario by Milan, and went with his elder brother and master, CHRISTOFANO, to Venice in 1490, where he became a follower of the Vivarini School of Venice. Of this Venetian period his *Portrait of a Senator*, in the National Gallery in London, is an example. Three years later (1493) Solario went back to Milan, and immediately came under the spell of Leonardo da Vinci. This, his later work, is seen at its best in the Poldi-Pezzoli Museum at Milan.

Of the men of this time, amongst whom perhaps the ablest were FILIPPO MAZZOLA of Parma, who caught much of the Venetian influence, and the two TACCONI, was an artist from Cremona, one BOCCACCIO BOCCACCINO (1460-1524), who combined the Lombard and Venetian styles with considerable skill; his gaiety of colour, his poetic landscape, and his best qualities are displayed in his fine *Marriage of St. Catherine* at the Academy in Venice.

So far, the Milanese contemporaries of Leonardo are seen to have passed completely under Leonardo's influence. The school that Leonardo founded by direct teaching brought forth a more or less brilliant group of pupils, but whose art cannot be said to have reached to the highest achievement. The most prominent were GIOVANNI ANTONIO BOLTRAFFIO (1467-1516), MARCO D'OGGIONO or D'OGGIONNO (born about 1470, died 1530), CESARE DA SESTO (1477-1523), SALAINO, GIANPETRINO, and MELZI —that Melzi who went with his master into France. They caught the tricks of thumb, the manner and style of their great master, but of his genius they could secure little. They ran to exhaustive finish, and their aim was prettiness;

they had small vision for character; and they were not above tediousness. But Boltraffio came to considerable distinction as portrait painter; and his *Head of Christ*, in the Morelli collection at Bergamo, reveals his highest reach of achievement. He had brilliant colour if somewhat hard in its brilliancy. He who looks upon Boltraffio's *Madonna and Child* in the National Gallery in London, must be struck by the overwhelming influence that Leonardo exerted upon Boltraffio's vision, for the pupil sees the Virgin's features through Leonardo's borrowed spectacles. Indeed, the whole group of these painters may be aptly described as fine Leonardesques. Melzi had much of the refined quality of a miniaturist; Salaino had exquisite delicacy of handling; d'Oggiono had a somewhat bizarre sense of beauty; Cesare da Sesto a feminine sweetness; Marco d'Oggiono is very fully represented in the public and private collections at Milan. At least they served their great master one vast good turn by their many copies of Leonardo's lost or perished works, thereby leaving us a clumsy idea of what these perished works might have been like.

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LUINI

1475?–1532

Of Leonardo's followers, as apart from his directly taught pupils, one of the most attractive artists was Bernardino Luini (1475?-1532), even though he lack force.

Born at Luini, on the Lago Maggiore, Bernardino Luini studied his craft under Borgognone, from whom he caught a spiritual sense which gave forth dreamy serenity and mystic charm, wedded to a feeling for beauty of a winsome and tender quality displayed in his many works in fresco and oils. But Luini, like all the Milanese painters,

fell at last under the compelling influence of Leonardo, and, without the force to be benefited by converse with the great, he became thenceforth little more than an imitator of the other, wholly lost his own vision, and sank into a Leonardesque.

Of his large and most important works—and he was a prolific painter—the frescoes from the Villa Pelucca, mostly now in the Brera at Milan and in the Louvre, though several were in the Kann collection, are the finest examples of his earlier and personal art, showing his gifts at their full, at the same time betraying his wonted lack of cohesion in composing. Of his later Leonardesque years, the *Christ disputing with the Doctors* or *Christ arguing with the Pharisees* in the National Gallery is a typical example, and was long attributed to Leonardo da Vinci.

Luini reached to brilliancy in his frescoes, employing rich and luminous colour, that utters well his joy in youth. His naïve grace brought freshness to religious themes, as in his charming *Mary with the Espalier of Roses.*

BAZZI, NICKNAMED "IL SODOMA"

1477 – 1549

Of all Leonardo da Vinci's followers, beyond question the most gifted was Bazzi, known from his flagrant life by the grim and awful name of "Il Sodoma." Bazzi, from repute (and Vasari's gossip is likely enough true), gave himself up to flagrant and vicious living, and whether the tale of his transgressions be over-coloured or not, he at any rate by his eccentric, indolent habits, and above all by his lack of sustained effort, dragged down his very remarkable and great powers to a lesser achievement than should have been his. The unequal artistry and obvious carelessness of much of his work in his authentic pieces would

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seem to prove at least that the repute of his sluggish and uncertain ways is justified.

Giovanni Antonio Bazzi was the son of a shoemaker. Born at Vercelli in 1477, he was early apprenticed to an insignificant painter of the place, called Spanzotto; but, whilst still in his youth, he wandered to Milan, and, as a consequence, fell under the spell of Leonardo da Vinci; and was probably painting in Milan when catastrophe fell upon the Ducal house. In 1501, at twenty-four, he moved southwards and settled in Siena; and it was at Siena that he chiefly created his masterpieces, and in the doing brought back life to the decaying art of that city.

Bazzi had been at work in Siena some six years when he was called to Rome in 1507 by Pope Julius II., to paint a series of frescoes in the Stanza della Segnatura of the Vatican; but there had arisen the genius of a youth called Raphael, whose friend he became; and all that remains of Bazzi's commission is the ceiling decoration round Raphael's *tondi* in the room that Bazzi was to have painted. But Rome possesses, in the Farnesina, a series of frescoes of remarkable beauty, painted for the banker Agostino Chigi when he again visited Rome seven years afterwards (1514).

In the cloisters of Monte Oliveto Maggiore, and in the Palazzo Pubblico of Siena, are fine frescoes that show Bazzi's remarkable powers. At the Uffizi Gallery is his most celebrated picture, the *St. Sebastian Banner*.

The Pope knighted Bazzi for a painting of *Lucretia*—which has vanished. Bazzi is at his best when dealing with simple arrangements. Dowered with an exquisite feeling for the beauty of the nude, he was always at his best when painting a single figure, as in his *S. Sebastian* at the Uffizi, which combines a Greek sense of beauty with a pathos that is wholly Christian.

Bazzi created a considerable school in Siena, where he lived his rollicking life amidst his horses and many eccentricities.

Raphael placed Bazzi very high as an artist, and painted his portrait next to himself in his famous *School of Athens* fresco—the figure in the white cap and gown, long said to be Perugino; but Perugino was then a much older man.

GAUDENZIO FERRARI

1470? – 1546

The mediocre painter Spanzotto must have been a better teacher than artist; from his studio at Vercelli came another pupil to Milan, GAUDENZIO FERRARI, born about 1470, and therefore some seven years older than Bazzi; and he, too, found a revelation in the art of Leonardo da Vinci; but he, like Bazzi, was too virile a painter to fall into flat mimicry and thus lapse into a Leonardesque, with mere prettiness as his aim. Gaudenzio had shown from youth a strength and originality, as in his paintings at the Sacro Monte of Varallo, which stood him in good stead; and he never allowed the stupendous genius of Leonardo to overwhelm his personal vision. He painted superb frescoes, twenty-one scenes from *The Life of Christ*, at S. Maria delle Grazie at Varallo, which are of remarkable power; and his frescoes at Vercelli bear witness to his forceful style and personal art.

Of the two best followers and fellow-townsmen of Gaudenzio, GIROLAMO GIOVENONE (1490?-1555) never came to Gaudenzio's gifts, though a good colourist; and Gaudenzio's pupil, BERNARDINO LANINI (1511?-1581), is best known by his many frescoes in his native town of Vercelli and the neighbourhood.

The whole lake-district of Italy is rich in works of

Leonardo's school; and it had this advantage over the schools of Raphael and Michelangelo, that the neo-paganism of Rome and Florence did not touch the northern valleys of Lombardy; the worldly patronage of splendour-loving popes and cardinals was unkown to the Milanese workers.

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THE LATER SIENESE SCHOOL

We have seen how the art of the Italian Renaissance had arisen rather in Siena than in Florence, brought to birth by the genius of Duccio. But, astounding as was its early strength, as seen in its development in the hands of Simone Martini, Segna, the Lorenzetti, the Golden Age of art in Siena had early passed, flown by 1400, with the Lorenzetti and the conquering force of Florence. Thenceforth Sienese art had moved along in the tradition it had created for itself, with Tuscan influence entering into it. It had produced VECCHIETTA, SASSETTA, MATTEO DI GIOVANNI (1435?-1495, by far the greatest of them), BENVENUTO DA SIENA, NEROCCIO DI LANDI, and BERNARDINO FUNGAI.

Fungai's two pupils, JACOPO PACCHIAROTTO (1474-1540) and GIROLAMO DEL PACCHIA (born in 1477 and living in 1535), came under the influence of Raphael and Fra Bartolommeo; but of these the arrival in Siena of Bazzi turned the art of Girolamo del Pacchia into the new manner created by Bazzi under the influence of Leonardo da Vinci, as indeed Bazzi's arrival influenced the further, if short-lived, endeavour of Siena.

Bazzi revealed their art to the architect and painter BALDASSARE PERUZZI (1481-1537) and to DOMENICO BECCAFUMI (1485-1551), who is celebrated as the designer of the famous

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pavement of Siena Cathedral. There had come to Siena in 1503, two years after Bazzi, the Umbrian painter, famed as Pinturicchio, to begin his great frescoes in the Library of the Duomo, and to Pinturicchio became assistant Baldassare Peruzzi, who later thereafter became a follower of Raphael.

Thus Sienese art lost all its character, and passed into and became a part of the art of the later Renaissance as Florence and Rome created it. Just as Siena became overwhelmed by her greater rival Florence, so her exquisite, tender, decorative sense in art, her sense of elegance and human beauty, more passionate but less disciplined than the art of Florence, passing into a mere aim of beauty, roused again for a brief effort under the shadow of Bazzi, and collapsed under the eventual and overwhelming outburst that created the giants in Florence; at the same time she infected the Umbrian School and greatly influenced the Golden Age.

CHAPTER XXI

WHEREIN WE SEE ART FLIT INTO THE UMBRIAN HILLS

WHEREIN WE SEE ART FLIT INTO THE UMBRIAN HILLS

We now come to the stupendous achievement of Florence in the fifteen-hundreds, and we shall find a strange element enter thereinto that Florence has not before known.

Florentine art was to reach to its complete grandeur in the genius of Michelangelo; but Michelangelo was not to stand alone, pure Florentine though he was in his achievement. There was to enter into the art of Florence another influence, quite alien to her spirit; and the invasion was to come from out the sunny genius of Venice—diluted and simplified, it is true—nevertheless, in its love of golden colours, Venetian at its source.

To the warmth of colour that came with Piero di Cosimo and Fra Bartolommeo out of Cosimo Rosselli's studio, came also light warm airs blowing from the south.

If you shall turn to the map of Italy, it will be seen that in Tuscany, Siena lies due south of Florence. To the south of Tuscany, where her southern borders reach towards the Apennines, lies Umbria amongst the hills.

The Umbrian towns were to create an art very different from that of Florence—different in spirit, in significance, in handling and treatment—as different as was the art of Siena and akin to the art of Siena. To understand the achievement of this school, and of its supreme genius Raphael, it is well to trace its growth and its blossoming.

Painting in Umbria arose in a miniaturist, famed in

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Dante's day, one ODERIGO or ODERISI; and careful finish and flat brilliancy, wedded to smiling gaiety of colour, became the utterance of the tribe. One of his pupils was GUIDO PALMERUCCI (1280-1345), whose pupil MARTINO NELLI, a mediocre fellow, became father to the chief painter of this early Umbrian achievement, OTTAVIANO DI MARTINO NELLI. Of about Nelli's day were the brothers GIACOMO and LORENZO DA SANSEVERINO, whose younger kinsman LORENZO DA SANSEVERINO II. was painting as late as 1496. ALLEGRETTO NUZI, known as GRITTO DA FABRIANO, prepared the way for the genius of that Umbrian town of Fabriano in the person of GENTILE DI NICCOLÒ DI GIOVANNI MASSI, known to fame as GENTILE DA FABRIANO.

GENTILE DA FABRIANO

1360 – 1428

The Umbrian School was an offspring of the Sienese, which we have already seen, under Duccio, greatly affected early Florentine endeavour, to fall away from Florence again into an achievement wholly apart. As the art of Umbria was to be akin to the art of Siena, so we have the people of Perugia akin to the people of Siena—*pietistic*, passionate, hotly emotional, quick to love or hate. Perugia, too, was torn with the quarrels of the factions—the savage and brutal feuds of the Oddi and Baglioni—at war with Assisi, exhausted at last by discord. Art revealed itself to Umbria towards the close of the thirteen-hundreds through the personality and genius of GENTILE DA FABRIANO (1360-1428), and, above all, in his *Adoration of the Magi*, at the Academy in Florence, which has all the freshness of youth, gay and debonair colour, and blithe narrative, and in his *Madonna in Glory* at the Brera in Milan.

Now Gentile da Fabriano had been to Venice, and

there had worked with his friend Pisanello, of Verona, the famed engraver of medals, a superb draughtsman, and quick of eye, who was the first Italian to catch and hold and truly give forth the movements of animals. From the Rhine had come to Venice, about 1450, the painter Roger van der Weyden, who saw and sang the praises of Pisanello and Gentile da Fabriano, seeing in them both gifts akin to his own. How much of Gothic joy in nature and love of life the great Northerner gave to them, and how much of Venetian colour and pomp and circumstance he took back with him to Flanders, who may tell? Verona, too, was in close touch with the Court of Burgundy; indeed, as early as 1400, Philip the Bold had bought Italian medals. The forerunners of the Van Eycks, even Hubert Van Eyck himself, learned many lessons from Venice and the northern cities near the lagoons; but their travels thereto had brought Flemish art also into Italy.

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Gentile da Fabriano seemed destined to rise and achieve his blithe record of the bright and pleasant life of his day, and to die, and Umbrian art to die with him, scarce stepping out of its half-Gothic beginnings, and his joy of life and glorious colour to be doomed to arouse no further achievement amongst the Umbrian hills. LORENZO DA SAN SEVERINO seems alone to have come to any distinction after him. But there came to the Umbrian towns, above all to Perugia, some impetus that, in the latter half of the fourteen-hundreds, created a school of painting wholly unlike that of Florence. Already stimulated by the blithe and colourful genius of Venice, through Gentile da Fabriano, Umbria took to herself something of the Sienese tradition, and uttered herself with a suave and generous faculty of colour and emotion in marked contrast, as though in deliberate challenge, to the austere grace of the Florentines. Fresh of vision, poetic

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and splendid, with something of Sienese limitation in the range of their art, the Umbrians frankly passed by the intellectual and tragic grandeur of the genius of Florence.

There had come to Orvieto with Fra Angelico, as his assistant, Benozzo Gozzoli; and Benozzo Gozzoli stayed behind and worked amongst the Umbrian cities. He brought new spirit into the declining life of Umbrian painting; revealing the more colourful side of the Florentine genius to BENEDETTO BONFIGLI (1425?-1496), Niccolò da Foligno (1430?-1502), and Fiorenzo di Lorenzo (1440-1522). Of these, Benedetto Bonfigli was clearly indebted to Lorenzo da San Severino, through one GIOVANNI BOCCATIS; born in Perugia, where most of his work is to be seen, he caught from Benozzo Gozzoli his taste for painting into his works the facts and habits of the life of his day. Benozzo Gozzoli's influence is even more marked in the art of Niccolò da Foligno; but in him was strongly developed that sincere and marked emotionalism of the Umbrian and Sienese schools, exaggerated from the tenderness and gentleness typical of these schools into more violent passion. In was, however, in FIORENZO DI LORENZO that Perugia found her first master of mark, though little is known of his life, and he is only mentioned by Vasari, unnamed, as Perugino's first master. Whether, as his work would seem to show, he learnt his craft under Benedetto Bonfigli, and afterwards came under the influence of Benozzo Gozzoli and then of Antonio Pollaiuolo, or not, he reveals a vision for depth of atmosphere and for painting his landscape backgrounds in tune with his figures, perhaps compelled upon his eyes by the clear air of the Umbrian hills, which were to have such a marked effect on the style of Perugino and the Umbrian School. He had, besides, a firm grip of character, and a strong feeling for creating it.

Fiorenzo is seen at his best in his *Annunciation* upon the wall of the church of S. Maria degli Angeli at Assisi, and in *The Nativity* and *Adoration of the Magi*, and the small lunette, amongst several paintings, at the Gallery in Perugia.

Fiorenzo's most brilliant pupils, Pietro Vannucci and Bernardino di Betto, were to be known in after years as Perugino and Pinturicchio, who developed their master's fine style and brought immortal fame to the picturesque hill-city of Umbria.

PERUGINO

1446 – 1523

PIETRO VANNUCCI, to become world-renowned as PERUGINO, was born in 1446 in a small mountain-town of Umbria, called Città della Pieve, near by Perugia. One of a large and very poor family, Pietro Vannucci was sent off, a mere child of nine, to the studio of Fiorenzo di Lorenzo in Perugia, to learn the craft and mystery of painting, wherefore his name of "il Perugino." Grown to youth, he went to Florence to complete his training, and thus came to work side by side with Leonardo da Vinci in the workship of Verrocchio.

Perugino early rose to repute, and his work to wide demand; he was soon so overwhelmed with orders that he could not even attempt to carry out many of them, though he had workshops both in Florence and Perugia, employing a large number of pupils and assistants. This accounts for much in the limitation of Perugino's promise, for Perugino was an astoundingly prolific worker; his art inevitably suffered both from the wide demand for it and his rapid production. Pressed by his popularity, he repeated the same types until he wrecked the freshness and allure of

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his design; he as inevitably became mannered to affectation, and ended in being wearisome. It is easy to understand a virile and dramatic artist of stupendous genius like Michelangelo speaking with contempt of Perugino as "that blockhead (*goffo*) in art," in the presence of the stream of work which poured out in his later years from his hand; indeed, from the year 1500 his art rapidly deteriorated. But Perugino's best work is of very high achievement. It has been said that his art is rarely inspired; and perhaps this is so—the effort to *appear* inspired is so dogged and insistent; but he uttered most exquisitely and subtly a mystic and idealistic note that is the very soul of the Umbrian character, and is rarely wholly absent from his devotional paintings—and he uttered it as no other painter ever did. His art knows no struggles of the soul; it is serene, contemplative, with a sense of dignity that is not without impressiveness, though it is tinged with the formal acceptance of the ideals of the devout. The presence of the Madonna rouses in him a sweet and tender regard; she appears ever as one held by a surprise of wonder that she, the wife of a well-to-do burgess of the city of Perugia, should have been chosen as the mother of God. Of dramatic sense he had none; and his figures thereby know little action—they are thrilled with no human passions, know no suffering, but rather give forth a fragrance that is sweetly devotional—they know the peace of a quiet and undisturbed mind. A certain and unquestioning creed, taught by the tradition of the big church in the town, holds them; and serenity exhales like incense from the works of his skill. "Fervour, not faith," it has been said, "is the keynote of Perugino's art"; but Perugino was almost incapable of so much artistic violence even as fervour—the fragrance of his art is

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of a more subtle and elusive kind, which is perhaps best expressed by such a phrase as the sense of peacefulness aroused by an oft-repeated prayer or hymn of praise.

Michelangelo's was a hard saying, but it was the contempt of a world-force, of a very tornado, for a still lake. Perugino's instinct for airy composition gives largeness to his design, and greatly enhances the serenity of mood that was his eternal aim and delight; and the beautiful, gem-like transparency of his colour further enhances his exquisite sense of reverie and sweet ecstasies. Perugino created for the soul a resting-place peopled with mild and saintly beings, where the pomps and vanities of the world are not thrust upon the attention, but only as an echo float in the air like an ethereal whisper. The worldly folk receive no shock of admonition—no hint of the day of wrath, nor, indeed, of the end of days.

It will be noticed that the colour-scheme of Perugino's paintings is nearly always dominated by blue—a limpid blue as of southern seas, pure and luminous as the tender blue of still waters, which he employs with strange allure to arouse a tense sense of serenity. And he ever sets his beautiful contemplative Madonnas and rapt saints against a serene mountain landscape, under a luminous peaceful blue of the high heavens that melt away into an horizon of cool pallor as of the glassy shallows of a pool, to meet the pale blue of the distant mountains in the leagues beyond at the edge of the hushed world.

The National Gallery in London possesses a superb example of his art at its highest achievement—the triptych (or triple picture) of *The Virgin adoring the Infant Christ, with the wing panels of the Archangel Michael, and the Archangel Raphael and the young Tobias*, which was once part of an altarpiece in the Certosa at Pavia, but, being replaced by

a copy there, this once votive offering against blindness was sold to the National Gallery by the Melzi family of Milan. At the Louvre is a very beautiful circular picture, or *tondo*, of the *Virgin and Child with Saints and Angels.*

Of Perugino's many pupils there was one that came to him in Perugia who was destined to immortal fame—a handsome youth of seventeen years, whom they called Raphael Sanzio, but whom all men now call Raphael. When the youth came to him in 1500, Perugino was at the very height of his career and reputation; the master was soon to see his pupil preferred before him, rising by leaps to the giddiest heights of public acclaim—and Perugino suffering much travail of heart thereby.

Whilst at work on a fresco at Fontignano in the February of 1523, his fame wholly dimmed by his pupil's splendour, though that pupil was already dead some three years gone by, Perugino caught the plague and died. It is interesting to know that this fresco on which his hand was busy when death took him in his seventy-seventh year is now at the National Gallery in London.

There is something fantastic in the pietism of Perugino's art amidst a world rapidly falling into scepticism and social corruption; yet there is a sense of formalism in that art which gives hint of the painting that is "lucrative."

Perugino's keen eye for the money-bags early taught him that eyes raised in ecstasy of sweet adoration, the upturned oval face, the head swung in humility of tenderness towards the shoulder, the exquisitely and daintily-robed figures, would win his art to the walls of the convent and the palace. But when he came to paint the Greek or Roman legend, or history of antique days, his pietistic sentimentality betrayed its limits—it fitted ill a Cato who held liberty above life. Like many of the pietistic, his

body held a sordid soul. His hard face does not belie him. Unfaithful, money-grubbing, dastardly in vengeance—he found the pietistic to pay, so he created pietisms. In the December of 1486 he hired a notorious assassin, Aulista di Angelo of Perugia, and, arming himself also, set out to way-lay and beat an enemy near S. Pietro Maggiore at Florence. The tale of the Church refusing his body burial after death was as likely enough due to panic of the plague—of which he died—though the story goes that he refused to confess as he lay dying, vowing that he wished to know how an unrepentant soul would fare in the other world.

WHEREIN WE SEE ART FLIT INTO THE UMBRIAN HILLS

Marrying a beautiful girl, he loved to dress her out in fine array and costly jewellery with his own hands. He treated Art as a trade—sought and obtained a large amount of orders, which his two great workshops and many apprentices turned out wholesale, and he thereby came to considerable estate. He suffered bitter jealousy of Michelangelo and his young pupil Raphael; indeed, there is something pathetic in the grey-haired old man retiring from Rome to make place for the gifted boy Raphael. But it seems to have made no difference to the demand for his works.

PINTURICCHIO

1454 – 1513

From the studio of this same Fiorenzo di Lorenzo's came also another pupil who was to know a wide fame. BERNARDINO DI BETTO, to become celebrated as PINTURICCHIO or PINTURICCHIO, the "little painter," was born in Perugia in 1454, and was therefore eight years younger than Perugino. Being set out as pupil to Fiorenzo, he rapidly came to the front, and seems to have passed into Perugino's workshop in Perugia as his manager or foreman. By twenty-six he was engaged, together with Perugino, for about three years

THE GOLDEN AGE

in decorating the Sistine Chapel at Rome, painting therein his frescoes of the *Journey of Moses* and the *Baptism of Christ*, in which *Baptism of Christ* he shows the marked influence of Perugino, as seen in Perugino's *Baptism of Christ* at the Rouen Museum. Pinturicchio was afflicted with deafness.

At Rome, Pinturicchio won to great favour, and was engaged upon and painted a large number of important works, of which were the famous *frescoes in the Bufalini Chapel of the Church of Ara Cœli*, the *frescoes in the Colonna Palace*, and the *frescoes in the Church of Santa Maria del Popolo*. About 1491 he started upon the *decoration of the Borgia Rooms in the Vatican* for the Borgian Pope Alexander VI. Pinturicchio was back in Perugia again by 1500, when the youth Raphael, at seventeen, entered Perugino's workshop there, and his art greatly influenced the eager and sensitive young fellow.

It was in 1502, Pinturicchio's forty-eighth year, when at the height of his maturity and powers and in the full utterance of his exquisite colour faculty, that he began his superb series of frescoes for Cardinal Francesco Piccolomini in the Library of the Cathedral at Siena of the *Life of Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini*, who had reigned as Pope Pius II., on which Pinturicchio was employed for five years, until 1507.

Shortly after completing these great frescoes, Pinturicchio painted the famous and far-famed *Return of Ulysses to Penelope*, now at the National Gallery in London, wrought in fresco, as a wall decoration for the Palace of Pandolfo Petrucci at Siena, but removed with astounding skill on to canvas in 1844, and bought some thirty years later by the National Gallery.

SCHOOL OF UMBRIA

Oderigo
Guido Palmerucci
1280 – 1345
Martino Nelli
Nelli

ALLEGRETTO NUZI

GENTILE DA FABRIANO 1360 – 1428 who influences Fra Angelico

Lorenzo da San Severino

Giovanni Boccatis

PIERO DEI FRANCESCHI trains

Signorelli — Melozzo da Forli

Giovanni Santi, father of Raphael

Palmezzano

BENOZZO GOZZOLI comes into Umbria and influences

BENEDETTO BONFIGLI 1425?–1496

NICCOLO DA FOLIGNO 1430? – 1502

FIORENZO DI LORENZO 1440 – 1522

PERUGINO 1446 – 1523

PINTURICCHIO 1454 – 1513

Balducci

BACCHIACCA 1494–1557

Manni

Lo Spagno died 1528

Bertucci

Timoteo Viti's pupil

RAPHAEL 1483 – 1520

Penni 1488–1528

Perino del Vaga 1500–1547

Giovanni da Udine 1487–1564

Giulio Romano d. 1546

Primaticcio 1504–1570

OF PAINTING

WHEREIN WE SEE ART FLIT INTO THE UMBRIAN HILLS

Pinturicchio brought to the art of Umbria a rich faculty for colour. His naïve design has something fantastically and charmingly primitive in it. It were as though he harked back to a style before the achievement of his master Perugino, compared with whom he is in some ways almost as a primitive. He fills his space with detail from end to end of it, yet he does it with something akin to the consummate skill of the East, so that his work is rarely congested or overloaded. One stands before it marvelling that it escapes confusion. By some subtle skill of design he arrives at an effect as of massing, or that takes the place of masses, who had no capacity whatever for massing. It is true that his anatomy and feeling for form are vague and uncertain, but he has a sense of action and a glowing and rich habit of colour in which he steeps his elaborate design with true painter's skill that is much more Venetian than Tuscan. There is a delightful piquancy in the almost childlike and uncalculated scheme of that design; but his unerring instinct wrought consummate design in all he did, scarce knowing what he did, as a bird's instinct makes a bird's song, regardless of the laws of counterpoint. It is wholly vain to measure that design with the rule and plummet of pedantic laws, and complain that he overcrowds it—he never afflicts one's senses with the discomforting impression of overcrowding; and until that sense of ill-ease is created there is no overcrowding. A space may be overcrowded with a single figure. Pinturicchio had an instinct for design and for colour all his own; he had as unerring an instinct for landscape, which he painted with exquisite vision. He could never resist birds, and you shall ever find him bringing one into his scheme wheresoever he can perch one; the freedom and airiness of the life of singing birds were in fact closely akin to the airy fancies of the

THE GOLDEN AGE

man's soul—indeed, the flight of his quick and blithe invention was as the flight of singing birds. He was a very poet of colour, which he wrought with intense lyrical qualities into an exquisite art.

It has been complained of Pinturicchio that he lacked the religious emotions and poetic feelings of Perugino. In the religious sense he is certainly not gifted, if the devotional sense of the Church be religion; but he had a lyrical sense which Perugino never approached, and he employed the chief significance of a painter, the music that is in colour, with a skill of hand which is astounding.

Bookish men have also blamed Pinturicchio in that the colours of his frescoes are too rich! and the illusion of plastic life too complete for the requirements of wall decoration!—that, instead of accentuating the flatness of the wall-surface, he aimed at making his paintings like glimpses of life seen through an open window! This is an age of strange accusations. All painting is upon flat surfaces; and why the flat surface of a wall should not give forth the illusion of depth, any more than a flat picture upon the wall, is quaint hair-splitting. To thrust aside as bad art all the wall paintings and huge canvases employed for wall paintings that contain the illusion of depth and do not accentuate the flatness of the wall, would mean the rejection of some of the world's mightiest masterpieces. Such laws are the veriest fribble. The artist is not concerned with announcing the flatness of a wall, otherwise the wall were better unpainted. It is the artist's province to create the illusion of life. And whether he state that illusion upon a wall in terms of flatness, or whether he create the illusion of the roundness of form here called the plastic life, is a matter of utter indifference. The painter's realm is to employ colour, and to accuse him of employing colour too

well or too richly is as though one said that Shakespeare made Hamlet too like Hamlet.

WHEREIN WE SEE ART FLIT INTO THE UMBRIAN HILLS

Pinturicchio has another claim to fame: he created the type of Madonna that became the ideal of Raphael, and is so distinctive of Umbria.

Strangely enough, though Pinturicchio wrought his art in several towns throughout Umbria and Tuscany, and ranged as far as Rome, yet he never seems to have set foot in Florence.

He brought his wanderings to a close towards the end of his life by settling in Siena, the scene of his greatest triumphs; and in Siena he laid him down and died, a starving and neglected man, broken in spirit by the brutal negligence of his infamous wife, Grania di Niccolò, whose intrigue with a soldier of the Sienese guard was an affair of public notoriety and shame.

One of Pinturicchio's ablest pupils was MATTEO BALDUCCI.

MANNI

14..?–1544

Besides Raphael, there had been pupils in Perugino's workshops who were to win to considerable repute.

In the little town of Città della Pieve, that gave birth to Perugino, was also born GIANNICOLA MANNI—who, like Raphael, learnt the craft and mystery of his art under Perugino and Pinturicchio, and who became assistant to Perugino; his earlier work is steeped in Perugino's tradition.

Manni appears to have settled in Perugia and begun to work on his own account about 1493. At first strongly under the influence of his master, Perugino, he thereafter came under the influence of Raphael, Bazzi, and eventually, it is supposed, Andrea del Sarto. In 1515 he began to

paint his chief works, the frescoes of the Sala del Cambio, which, being wrought in desultory fashion, reveal the various changes and influences which came over his later style. He was elected a Decemvir of Perugia in 1527, where he died on the 27th of October 1544.

LO SPAGNA

GIOVANNI DI PETRO, better known as LO SPAGNA or LO SPAGNOLO—"the Spaniard"—was another pupil of the same masters in Perugia; indeed, next to Raphael, is Perugino's most distinguished pupil. In his earlier work is to be seen the strong influence of his master, and later that of his fellow-student Raphael. Little is known of Lo Spagna's life, except that he was probably making his mark by 1503 and certainly by 1507. He is now credited with having painted the famous Caen *Sposalizio*, long held to be by Perugino. He was made a citizen of Spoleto in 1516, and the year after he was elected head of the Society of Painters of that town, and is known to have been alive in 1530. The *Madonna Enthroned*, painted in the year that he was made a citizen of Spoleto, now in the chapel of San Stefano in the lower church of San Francesco at Assisi, is one of his best-known works; but it is likely that many paintings to-day attributed to Perugino and to Raphael in his youth, are really the work of Lo Spagna's hand.

GIOVANNI BATTISTA BERTUCCI, born at Faenza, and working in the early years of the fifteen-hundreds, was reared under the influence of the same masters, Perugino and Pinturicchio; and his works were also wont to be given to Perugino and Pinturicchio, or to Lo Spagna. But he, like Raphael, came under the influence of the Bologna painters, Costa and Francia, of the school of Padua

XXIII

RAPHAEL
1483 – 1520

UMBRIAN SCHOOL

"THE VIRGIN AND CHILD ATTENDED BY ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST AND ST. NICHOLAS OF BARI"
(Commonly known as the "Ansidei Madonna")

(NATIONAL GALLERY)

The Virgin is seated holding the Infant Christ on an elevated throne with three steps. To the left stands St. John the Baptist. On the right stands St. Nicholas of Bari, wearing his episcopal robes and mitre; in the foreground, at his feet, are the three golden balls, representing the three purses of gold, which are his attributes.

Painted in oil, on thick poplar wood; arched at the top. 7 ft. 1 in. h. × 4 ft. 10½ in. w. (2·159 × 1·485).

SALVE·MATER·CHRISTI

and Venice. Of Perugino's pupils also was FRANCESCO UBERTINI, better known as IL BACCHIACCA (1494-1557).

WHEREIN WE SEE ART FLIT INTO THE UMBRIAN HILLS

We have seen the Umbrian School of Painters displaying a rich sense of colour, and a style and significance in art, akin to that of Venice and of Siena. They are receptive to many influences, and eagerly adopt them. They are inclined to be what the pedants call *eclectic*—"borrowers," choosers of the best out of everything, makers of fine mixtures. The art of Florence of the fifteen-hundreds is henceforth, also, to become "eclectic," borrowing from the best that has gone before, both in Florence and in Venice and in Umbria—except only one majestic genius, a very giant, Michelangelo, who stands out alone, head and shoulders above the whole magnificent achievement of Tuscany. But of the splendid borrowers, the mightiest and largest was Raphael, lord of the school of Umbria—indeed, for several centuries he was to be hailed as "king of painters."

CHAPTER XXII

WHEREIN WE WALK WITH RAPHAEL, THE RADIANT CHILD OF FORTUNE AND APOSTLE OF GRACE

THE GOLDEN AGE

THERE lived, side by side, and wrought their art in those early fifteen-hundreds, Raphael and Michelangelo, with Andrea del Sarto for splendid company; and rounded off the significance of the Renaissance in Tuscany in its supreme flight of achievement.

Raphael created little, initiated little, but he rather gathered into his single personality the whole and varied activities of the men who had gone before; and forthwith selected from all such their supreme qualities, and wrought them into a wondrous whole, as though in him were to be gathered their varied design that it might be given forth in a glorious flowering.

Raphael and Michelangelo changed the scene of the triumphs of the Renaissance from Florence to Rome; but Florentine and Umbrian it was, nevertheless.

To understand the significance of Raphael and his art, it is necessary to glance back awhile.

The artistic school of Venice had thrown out many offshoots throughout the north of Italy; and one of her colonies, Bologna, had bred a goldsmith-painter of distinction, his name FRANCIA—born in the mid-fourteen-hundreds (1450)—who had founded his artistry upon the practice of Giovanni Bellini. In Francia's workshop, first as pupil, then as foreman, was a young Umbrian from

XXIV

RAPHAEL
1483 – 1520

UMBRIAN SCHOOL

"LA BELLE JARDINIÈRE"

(LOUVRE)

The Virgin is seated in a flowery meadow. She looks down to the left at the Infant Jesus, who leans against her knee and draws her attention to the little St. John the Baptist who kneels to the right, his reed cross in his right hand.

The signature seems to be:—"VRB. RAPHAELLO MDVII."

Painted in oil on panel. 3 ft. 8 in. × 2 ft. 7½ in. (1·22 × 0·80).

Urbino, one TIMOTEO VITI—and out of this partnership was to be born a strange destiny.

WHEREIN WE WALK WITH RAPHAEL, THE RADIANT CHILD OF FORTUNE AND APOSTLE OF GRACE

RAPHAEL

1483 – 1520

On the Low Sunday of 1483, which fell on the 6th of April, there was born in the Umbrian town of Urbino, to one Giovanni Santi, poet and painter of no mean gifts at the Court of Guidobaldo, Duke of Urbino, and to Magia Ciarla, his wife, a man-child whom they christened RAPHAEL SANTI, or Raffaelle Sanzio, who was to reach to mighty immortality as RAPHAEL.

The father, Giovanni Santi, was a painter of considerable gifts, as is proved by his *Madonna and Child* at the National Gallery in London; but he died when his son was only eleven years old—the lad's mother having died when he was eight.

The boy Raphael was no infant wonder; however, he was eager to learn, whensoever and wheresoever he could find the chance, and showed a keen desire to absorb all that came into his way from the very beginning; also he was endowed with a prodigious industry, a dogged and persistent will, and gave himself up to heavy and laborious training. He had little confidence in his own powers, even when well set into youth. It is little likely that a boy of eleven, of no precocious habit, should have learnt much from his courtier father. It is said that his mother had that spiritual beauty which the boy wrought about his Madonnas; but a boy of eight would visualise little of such subtleties. His bent towards an artistic career, however, was likely enough due to his father's habits; and he may have acquired some little of his early training from him. He is said to have been much influenced by the

THE GOLDEN AGE

work of Piero della Francesca, but to what degree it would be idle to say to-day; certainly not by the artist himself, since, though Francesca had been the guest of Raphael's father at Urbino in 1469, it was fourteen years before Raphael was born. His work, and that of many others, no doubt was a part of Raphael's eager "eclectic" borrowing; but an eleven-year-old boy's borrowings must have been of the vaguest.

The year after his father died—in 1495, the boy Raphael being then twelve, Timoteo Viti, his five years of service to Francia at Bologna done, came back to Urbino, steeped in the artistry, and seeing with the vision, of Francia. To him the boy was apprenticed; and the eager lad leaped to borrow his craftsmanship from the revelation of Francia that Timoteo Viti brought into Umbria. From him he learned to draw the rounded and opulent forms, and to paint the rich and sensuous colour, so utterly alien to the Florentine spirit. At sixteen or seventeen Raphael went to Perugia and entered the studio of Perugino, some say as pupil, more likely as assistant in the workshop. The little *St. Michael* at the Louvre, painted for the Duke Guidobaldo on the back of a chessboard, must also be early work. When Raphael went to Perugino's workshop at Perugia, that master, overwhelmed with orders, was at Florence, and Pinturicchio was the foreman of his Perugian studio; from whom and from Perugino the sensitive and borrowing youth almost wholly drew his art for the four years that he wrought with persistent address in the great Umbrian workshop. Pictures were painted by him during these years from the cartoons and studies of both masters; and, by consequence, his art whilst he painted in Perugia was a blend of the styles created by Francia and Perugino, not untouched by the colour faculty of Pinturicchio—his first

WHEREIN WE WALK WITH RAPHAEL, THE RADIANT CHILD OF FORTUNE AND APOSTLE OF GRACE

revelation of his habit of taking all that was best from others and creating a composite style out of them. The *Solly Madonna* and a *Crucifixion* were painted between 1500 and 1502, his seventeenth and eighteenth years; his *Vision of a Knight* and *Coronation of the Virgin* for the Oddi family between 1502 and 1504, his nineteenth and twenty-first years, together with the *Diatalevi Madonna*, the *Madonna with SS. Francis and Jerome*. And with what rapid strides his industry and catholic taste urged forward his hand's skill, you may see in the exquisite little painting of *The Vision of a Knight*, wrought by the youth when seventeen, and now at the National Gallery in London. It was at Perugia that he painted the small *Conestabile Madonna* now at St. Petersburg, once belonging to the Conestabile-Staffa family; and at the end of his four years thereat, in 1504, he painted, and for the first time signed and dated his work, in the *Sposalizio* or *Betrothal of the Virgin*, now at the Brera in Milan. He has not yet wholly found himself —he is forming his style, out of the various styles of others.

It was in the October of 1504, in his twenty-first year, already famous at the edge of manhood, that Raphael, bearing a letter of introduction from the Duchess della Rovere, sister of the art-loving Duke Guidobaldo of Urbino, to the Gonfaloniere Pietro Soderini, took his way to Florence, and for the next four years, advancing from success to success, and rapidly rising to increased fame, he wrought the beautiful Madonnas that are the talk of the wide world.

Raphael painted in Florence, shortly after his arrival, the famous *Madonna del Gran' Duca*, which is one of the treasures of the Pitti Palace in that city of treasures. It came by its name and to its present home in quaint fashion. Towards the end of the sixteen-hundreds it was in the

THE GOLDEN AGE

possession of an old woman, from whom a dealer bought it for four pounds, and was sold by him to the Grand Duke of Tuscany—hence its name. The beautiful *Madonna del Cardellino* of the Uffizi Gallery was painted some couple of years thereafter, by Raphael for his friend Lorenzo Nasi, as a wedding-present to his bride—this is the painting in which the boy John the Baptist offers a goldfinch (*cardellino*) to the infant Christ, the goldfinch being a symbol of the Divine Sacrifice from the blood-red marks upon it. Like all of Raphael's Madonna pictures, except the *Sistine Madonna* and the *Madonna of the Tower*, this *Madonna del Cardellino* was painted on wood, and was broken to pieces in the earthquake of 1547; but the pieces were put together again by Nasi's son with such skill and care that the breaks are only to be found by keen scrutiny.

A couple of years in Florence, with its vast artistic achievement, were not lost upon the eager ken of the impressionable Raphael—from Masaccio's frescoes in the Carmine, and Donatello's sculptured marble, and Luca and Andrea della Robbia's modelled terra-cottas, to Michelangelo's colossal statue of *David* (which was set up in 1504) and his *Holy Family* in the Uffizi, to the paintings of Domenico Ghirlandaio and of Leonardo da Vinci and Fra Bartolommeo, which were in the full freshness of their splendour, he took all that he could weld into his Umbrian vision—selected, annexed, dissolved, and re-wrought into his own personal concept, without losing that personal vision or abjectly surrendering it; and by consequence of his wide gleanings he became enslaved by none. Master of a new sense of modelling and of grouping, he now evolved a marked style, which is seen in his world-famous *Madonna degli Ansidei* or *Ansidei Madonna*, one of the great treasures of the National Gallery in London, and taking its

name from the family chapel of Filippo di Simoni Ansidei, in the insignificant little church of San Fiorenzo at Perugia. The *Ansidei Madonna* was given to the third Duke of Marlborough by his brother, Lord Robert Spencer, at the end of the seventeen-hundreds; and on its becoming known, in 1884, that the eighth duke was to sell his collection, and the Director of the National Gallery, Sir Frederick Burton, valuing the picture to the Treasury at 110,000 guineas, Gladstone, being Chancellor of the Exchequer, offered the Duke £70,000 from the nation, to whom, by Special Act of Parliament, then passed, in splendid condition, one of Raphael's highest achievements. Its predella, as the frieze is called that runs along the foot of an altarpiece, had been kept by Lord Robert Spencer—of its three panels two have disappeared, but the third, *St. John the Baptist Preaching*, is in the collection of the Marquess of Lansdowne at Bowood. Other early Madonnas are his *Madonna of the Palm Tree*, the *Madonna of the Meadow*, now in Vienna, the *Madonna Canigiani*, the *Madonna della Casa Tempi*, the *Orleans Madonna*, the two Cowper *Madonnas* at Panshanger, and the *Madonna del Baldacchino* at the Pitti. To his period in Florence also belong his charming portrait of himself at the Uffizi, the *St. George* and the *Apollo and Marsyas*, all three painted in 1506.

Close on the completion of the *Ansidei Madonna* was painted, in 1507, the *Entombment* at the Borghese Palace in Rome, in which, in spite of its pathos and beauty of handling, Raphael reveals his laborious efforts to blend the styles of Perugino, Mantegna, and Michelangelo, not without weakness and the crowding of its composition.

About the time he painted the *Entombment*, he was at work upon the large *Madonna di Sant' Antonio*, bought by Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan. Painted for the nuns of Sant'

Antonio of Padua for their convent in Perugia, they sold it in 1677 for a small sum—the five panels of its great centre picture had shrunk apart, leaving fissures, and the colour was beginning to flake off—Antonio Bagazzini, the nobleman of Perugia who bought it, promising a copy as substitute. The nuns of St. Anthony had already sold the five little panel pictures of its predella in 1663 to Queen Christina of Sweden. Thence the Madonna passed to Prince Colonna—thence in 1825 to Francis I., King of the Two Sicilies—thence to Francis II., King of Naples, whose bedroom it adorned, until the Revolution of 1860 sent him flying, and the picture with him, into his Spanish exile. In 1867 the Director of the National Gallery, Sir William Boxall, was in treaty for it for the State, but Disraeli had to abandon the intention owing to its going to Paris to be offered to France instead, where it lay, packed in a case, during the war with Germany of 1870. It was again offered to England—then, after purchase by Colnaghi the dealer, from whom it went to M. Sedelmeyer of Paris, it came to Mr. Pierpont Morgan for £100,000 in 1901. The five panels of its predella are now, two of them, *St. Francis of Assisi* and *St. Anthony of Padua*, in the Dulwich College Gallery; the third, *The Agony in the Garden*, belongs to Mr. Burdett-Coutts; the fourth, *Christ bearing the Cross*, belongs to the Earl of Plymouth; and the fifth, the *Pietà*, is in Mrs. J. L. Gardiner's collection at Fenway Court in Boston in the United States. Of the picture of the Madonna itself, it must be remembered that it has undergone much restoration, from which it has suffered considerably, but it was probably never as fine a work as the *Ansidei Madonna*.

Shortly afterwards Raphael was at work on the celebrated *La Belle Jardinière*, now at the Louvre, which was

bought by Francis I. of France. The name is founded on a legend that a "gardener's daughter" sat as model for the Madonna, but it is as likely that the gardener's daughter was invented to fit the title. At any rate it is but a legend, which would easily spring up about the Madonna, who sits on a hillock, flowers at her feet. Raphael was painting the panel when he was called to Rome in 1508, and forthwith obeyed the summons, leaving the blue drapery of the Madonna to be finished by Ridolfo Ghirlandaio, the son of the famous Ghirlandaio.

Raphael in Rome, 1508

Pope Julius II. called the young Raphael to Rome in 1508, and the young fellow came on the tide of fortune. Julius had hated the dead Pope Alexander VI., one of the vilest of the Borgias. He detested to live in the same rooms that the Borgian had used at the Vatican. He determined, in the year that followed Raphael's arrival, to move to the upper room which Piero dei Franceschi and Bramantino had decorated. Julius, not approving the decorations, had set Perugino, Pinturicchio, Peruzzi, Bazzi, and Signorelli to work upon that part called the *Stanze*, or Library. Raphael's work so pleased Julius that he forthwith decreed that he should obliterate the work of the others and paint it again. It is to Raphael's eternal credit that at any rate he saved the work of Perugino, Peruzzi, and Bazzi from destruction, and though his entreaties could not save the series of heads by Bramantino, he had them copied by his assistants before they were destroyed.

When Raphael alighted at Rome in the summer of 1508, he was but twenty-five years of age, with a great reputation, and such master-work as the *Madonna del Gran' Duca*, the *Madonna del Cardellino*, the *Ansidei Madonna*, and

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La Belle Jardinière behind him. He came to find Michelangelo at work on his great ceiling-paintings of the Sistine Chapel for Pope Julius II.

The two men—Michelangelo being thirty-three, Raphael twenty-five—so different in character, in art, in their significance and their vision, were soon embarked upon a hot rivalry. The one with noble blood in him, a grim and overwhelming giant of a man—compelling and creative—the other a born courtier, the son of a courtier. The art of Michelangelo, so vast and sublime that little men could scarce see it, the art of the other so easy to see. With the aged Pope, Julius II., whose greybearded features are so familiar to us through the young Raphael's famous portrait of him, Raphael was early a favourite. Treated with the greatest pomp and ceremony, honours showered upon him, and orders for work flowing in upon him, the young fellow's genius expanded in the sunshine, and his skill of hand brought forth masterpieces that are an astounding achievement in one so young. He became the centre of a very court. He surrounded himself with pupils, and henceforth furnished only the cartoons for his frescoes and for many of the pictures attributed to him—his pupils carrying them out, Raphael putting the finishing touches upon them where necessary. Of these pupils, the most gifted and best-beloved was Giulio Pippi, better known as GIULIO ROMANO, who, with GIANFRANCESCO PENNI, painted most of the frescoes at the Vatican after Raphael's designs. Giulio Romano's work is marked by that preference for brick-red in his carnation tones which is seen also in these Raphael frescoes—a defect eagerly imitated by generations of artists who, dazzled by the fame of Raphael's reputation, fervently sought to repeat what they took to be his mastery in colour, but of which Raphael was wholly innocent!

OF PAINTING

WHEREIN WE WALK WITH RAPHAEL, THE RADIANT CHILD OF FORTUNE AND APOSTLE OF GRACE

By his great patron, Pope Julius II., Raphael was employed in the decoration at the Vatican of certain rooms called the *Stanze*, and in the long covered gallery round the courtyard of San Damasio called the *Loggie*. For the *Stanze* he painted vast religious, historical, and allegorical compositions. His first large fresco in the *Stanze* was the famed *Disputa del Sacramento*, better described as *The Triumph of the Church*, a work in which he reached an astounding power of arrangement that gives a profound sense of dignity and immensity. He takes from all that has gone before, but he blends the genius of his forerunners into a masterpiece of which none had been capable. At once his skill in arrangement of masses is seen to have matured as at a stroke. Of several others in the *Stanze* were *The School of Athens*, the *Parnassus*, the *Heliodorus driven from the Temple*, the *Pope Leo checking the advance of Attila*, and *L'Incendio del Borgo*. Of these, the *Parnassus*, painted in 1511, is one of his earliest and finest pagan frescoes. These great frescoes have the added inestimable value of containing portraits of many of Raphael's great contemporaries and forerunners—the famed Dante portrait, Savonarola, Fra Angelico, Bramante, Leonardo da Vinci, Castiglione, Federigo Gonzaga, Bazzi il Sodoma, Raphael himself, and many others, not forgetting the Pope, Julius II.

For the *Loggie* he designed a series of frescoes of scenes from sacred history, generally known as *Raphael's Bible*, and directed a profusion of elaborate decorations founded on the paintings of ancient Rome. Living a life of pleasure, with a retinue worthy of a prince, the lover of a lady of whom he has left a fine portrait, the *Donna Velata*, at the Pitti Palace, in twelve years he wrought this stupendous work which alone might have filled the full life of any industrious man; he found time, besides, to paint Madonna pieces that

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would make the reputation of the greatest masters, and to paint portraits of superb achievement. Between the years 1508 and 1512 he wrought the *Madonna of Foligno*, now at the Vatican, the *Garvagh*, *Diadem* and *Casa d'Abba* Madonnas, and the *Madonna of the Tower*, so called from the small tower seen in the landscape of the background, a picture lately given to the National Gallery in London by a member of the family of Mr. R. J. Mackintosh, who bought it at the sale of Samuel Rogers, the poet, who bought it from Mr. Henry Hope's sale, who had it from the Orleans collection—its possession by Rogers accounting for its long-time name of the *Rogers Madonna*, and it will sometimes be found under the name of the *Madonna with the Standing Child*. It has suffered much restoration and over-cleaning—indeed this, one of the only two Madonnas painted on canvas by Raphael, is challenged as being the work of Raphael's hands; and even the cartoon for it, in the Print Room of the British Museum, is set down to Brescianino, Fra Bartolommeo, and Andrea del Sarto, as well as to Raphael, by the doubters. The drawing and modelling may have been rendered weak by the many over-cleanings; but if by Raphael, this picture reveals his colour-sense profoundly enhanced by the Venetian achievement; for in it he displays a faculty for colour which he never again approached.

The death of Julius II. in 1513, and the election of Pope Leo X., saw the labours of Raphael largely extended in Rome; and the death of Bramante, the architect of St. Peter's, the following year, saw Raphael appointed in his stead. The year that followed he was made Inspector of the Antiquities and Monuments of Rome, with the supervision of the excavation of Rome, which had grown into a keen pursuit. This year of 1515, Raphael,

at thirty-two, painted the great portrait of *Baldassare Castiglione*, once the property of Charles I. of England, but now at the Louvre. It was on his coming to Rome that Raphael began to work on his superb portraits; and this one reveals him at the height of his powers.

WHEREIN WE WALK WITH RAPHAEL, THE RADIANT CHILD OF FORTUNE AND APOSTLE OF GRACE

About this time also he made his famous *Cartoons:* broadly drawn in chalk on stout sheets of paper, and highly coloured in distemper, as cartoons for the weavers of tapestries at Arras, designed to be hung in the Sistine Chapel, and which were woven and placed therein in 1519; the cartoons were left at Arras where the tapestries were wrought, and lay there long forgotten, until Rubens found them—and it was on his shrewd advice that Charles the First of England bought them. Each of the cartoons had been cut up; and they were joined together and restored, but in spite of their mutilation they retain their broad and simple grandeur of design and arrangement, and display consummate draughtsmanship. Of these Raphael *Cartoons*, seven are to-day amongst the supreme treasures of the British Crown, and are to be seen at the South Kensington Museum, whither they were taken from Hampton Court some years ago.

It was in the next year, 1516, that Raphael painted a very popular picture of the Madonna, his charming *Madonna della Sedia* (the Madonna of the Chair). Here again, though the hand of the restorer has done its work, the comely peasant-girl is painted with rare charm, and the colour-faculty is considerable; and, as usual with Raphael, both the sturdy child in her arms and the Madonna herself are rather a straightforward picture of a countrywoman folding her boy in her arms than the Divine Infant in the care of the appointed Mother of God—the range of the imagination is of the most limited kind. But

it is just that simple, homely appeal, which has sent the crude reproductions of this masterpiece broadcast into thousands of homes.

Of the great Madonna pieces on which Raphael's wide popularity is built, the supreme masterpiece of the world-famed *Sistine Madonna*, now at Dresden—and sometimes known as the *Dresden Madonna*—was painted a couple of years afterwards, about 1518—and, contrary to Raphael's habit, upon canvas. Painted for the monks of the monastery of San Sisto at Piacenza, to be set above the high altar of their church there, where it stood until 1715, it was sold, under the temptation of the then huge bribe of £9000, to the Elector Augustus II. of Saxony. This was to be but the beginning of its dramatic adventures. It became part of Napoleon's splendid loot, and hung in the Louvre until 1814, when, on the fall of the Corsican, it was sent back to Dresden, where it now is. What need to describe the masterpiece which engravings and colour-prints and the photograph have made familiar to every civilised being! In painting the Virgin in Glory, standing in the heavens, her Infant Son held in her arms, Pope Sixtus II., Saint Barbara, and the two famous little cherubim adoring, Raphael created a work which is infused with dignity and majesty in spite of its poverty of skill in arrangement, in spite of its stupid curtains in the high heavens, in spite of the clumsy arrangement of the two saints, and the scattered and broken interest—and in nothing is this innate dignity seen more fully than when, as is usual in reproductions, the central figures of the Virgin and Child are torn from their surroundings and are seen in the full splendour of their achievement, withdrawn from all conflicting elements.

Raphael has been as undeservedly belittled and out of the fashion of late, as he was for centuries grossly overrated.

WHEREIN WE WALK WITH RAPHAEL, THE RADIANT CHILD OF FORTUNE AND APOSTLE OF GRACE

The latest claim, wherein he has been hailed in ecstatic fashion as "the greatest master of space-composition," could only have been made by writers on art who are not themselves artists. This new cult of "space composition" has no significance for an artist, who means by composition and by space quite other things. It is a literary cult, meaning the arrangements of composition in relation to the depth of a picture. In this faculty Raphael was no more a supreme master than many another painter. In the more vital faculty of arrangement and spacing, as artists understand it, in that power of arranging and filling the painted ground with such skill that the largeness of the composition creates and arouses, through our sense of vision, emotions such as the deep phrasing of great music creates in our hearing, Raphael more than once proved himself a master. But he was not particularly gifted in the power of creating space music. His art depends always on its utterance of gracefulness, uttered in the manner called grandiose. He developed certain fine spacings, 'tis true—but he repeated them overmuch.

The portrait of his great patrons, the bearded *Pope Julius II. seated in a Chair*, and the clean-shaven *Pope Leo X.* at the Pitti Palace in Florence, are of the finest examples of that portraiture which Raphael practised after his coming to Rome. The Prado holds his fine *Cardinal Bibbiena*; the Pitti his *Angiolo Doni* and *Maddalena Doni*; the S. Luca Gallery at Rome his so-called *Violin-Player*; and the Borghese his so-called *Perugino*, the authorship of which is challenged, but which is, if by Raphael, his greatest portrait.

Raphael was now rich and greatly courted. Cardinal Bibbiena had proposed an "advantageous match" with his niece Maria, to which Raphael pledged himself, with what

intention of redeeming the pledge we shall never know—he was a tactful soul. He was living at the time with the beautiful daughter of a baker from Siena, his famed mistress the "Bella Fornarina." His ardent love-sonnets hint at many affairs of the heart.

During the last few years of his life in Rome, Raphael, as he had earlier done with his frescoes, handed over the greater part of his paintings to his pupils and assistants, of whom the most important were now Giulio Romano, Francesco Penni, and Perino del Vaga. But he himself painted, for Agostino Chigi's Villa Farnesina, the fresco of *Galatea*, and for the same merchant-prince the *frescoes of the Chigi Chapel* in S. Maria della Pace.

Raphael was at work upon his great *Transfiguration*, now at St. Peter's in Rome, when he caught fever whilst superintending some excavations, and died on the Good Friday of 1520, which happened to fall on his thirty-seventh birthday, the 6th of April. The beautiful Margaret, "La Fornarina," was with him as he lay dying; but was put out of the room by the messenger of the Pope, who refused the dying man the benediction in her presence.

The *Transfiguration* was finished, after Raphael's death, by his favourite pupil, Giulio Romano.

Four months after Raphael died, the "Fornarina," Margaret Luti, daughter of Francesco Luti of Siena, was received into the congregation of Sant' Apollonia in Trastevere, a home for repentant Magdalenes—she whose face lives immortal in the *Sistine Madonna*, in the *Donna Velata*, and the *St. Cecilia* as well as other Madonna pieces.

Raphael, the sunny child of Fortune, basking ever in the warm rays of Success, was a born courtier. He saw life as a courtier. He read the gospels like a courtier.

WHEREIN WE WALK WITH RAPHAEL, THE RADIANT CHILD OF FORTUNE AND APOSTLE OF GRACE

His Madonnas, his infant-Christs, his saints, are the creations of a courtier. His superb *Dispute of the Sacrament* is a mighty significance as seen by a courtier. His chief friend, Count Baldassare Castiglione, was a courtier, and wrote *The Book of the Courtier*. Raphael is, and always will be, the literary man's ideal of a painter, "the most beloved of artists."

He has been hailed as "the most classically perfect student of pure beauty"—whatever that may mean. How he could be so without creating the greatest types of beauty, it were difficult to say; and to say that he did so, were to ride for a fall.

Raphael is the painter of Grace, of gentle Temperance, of Sweetness—a sunny soul living in brightness, unruffled by tragedies or terrors; radiant as the sun-god, smiling, blind to all discomforting things. He is the painter-poet of Loveliness. His brief life was a pageant of success. He was at least faithful to his mistress. His wealth of achievement is a world-wonder. He is the type of that part of the sumptuous life of Florence that went calmly along a flower-strewn way whilst the streets on every hand were racked with vice and suffering and violence. He was akin in spirit to the French court-painters of the years before the Revolution, except that he ever turned his eyes from naughtiness, and refused even to suspect the lords of the people of adulteries. Of the essential Renaissance Raphael spoke no word, uttered no indiscretion.

The art of Raphael, greatly honoured in the days when he wrought it in all the splendour of his brief and successful life, was grossly overrated for centuries as the supreme achievement of the Renaissance, and so continued almost into our own day. He was acclaimed the "king of painters," "the divine painter," who was none of these. All men who

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took pen in hand, and desired to be considered cultured, all men who did the Grand Tour, every man who desired to acquire the reputation of learned or fashionable bloods—the professor of history or dictator of taste, the moralist and the scientist and the philosopher, grew to look upon Raphael as the lord of art—they fashioned their theories on it, floated their schemes of the works of man's brain upon it, made it the groundwork of their researches into what they falsely mistook to be art, and generally called by some such phrase as the Sublime and the Beautiful. The artists also, when they wrote of their art, or spoke of it, or theorised about it, bowed to this sorry conception of it. Reynolds knew that Raphael was not the greatest of artists, but he dared not say so.

The end was inevitable. A violent reaction followed, Raphael was flung from his pedestal—as the achievement of all Italy must and will be flung from its ridiculous pedestal—but, as inevitably, he has been grossly underrated and reviled and sneered at.

Raphael is a great significance in art—if not the mighty significance he was once declared to be. In the glamour that the intellectual snobbery of the Æsthete and the Cultured cast about him, he was hailed as uttering in his Madonnas and child-Christs a wondrously reverent and spiritual significance which is exactly what his whole achievement lacks. His art is devoid of that wondrous and exquisite and subtle mystic religious fervour that marked the art of the great painters of the fourteen-hundreds. Florence, in his day, was herself wholly devoid of it—and Rome even more void. Raphael wrought his grandiose and graceful art for beauty's sake alone; and for such beauty as expressed the aristocratic ideal of beauty that was the sumptuous and splendid aim in the palaces of

the great. He painted country-girls for Madonnas—they are neither country-girls nor Madonnas, but the country-girl as the courtiers in palaces would see her, dressed for the part, elegantly graceful, and as nice as possible for her majestic and awful destiny.

WHEREIN WE WALK WITH RAPHAEL, THE RADIANT CHILD OF FORTUNE AND APOSTLE OF GRACE

Raphael is the type of his age. Italy had spent herself in the feverish and astounding activities of the Renaissance to lead the world in the New Learning, to stand in the New Dawn as the lord of the great advance of the human soul. Italy arose like a splendid young giant from the sloth of the past, who arrays himself in the splendour and knowledge of past ages, but has no vision beyond the edge of his narrow world. She was too steeped in her ancient glory, too weighted with the armour of her ancient beliefs, to arise out of the wreckage that her awakening wrought. The new life, the new revelation, was to pass to a more vigorous breed, less weighted by ancient traditions, more stern of purpose, more disciplined of will, that hated the sham forms of liberty without freedom as much as the æsthetic Italians adored them—to a race that had its heart in its home, not in an awestruck delight in the splendour of the palaces of its lords.

Raphael was what the pedants called "eclectic," a borrower and user of other men's splendour—and a Mighty Borrower he was. He took the best from all that the art of Italy had wrought in his native land of Umbria, with the art that he found in Florence and Rome, the lands of his adoption; he selected from the great ones, and welded their artistry into his hand's skill, wrought a style of his own out of their various achievements, and employed it to utter his own vision in so far as he had a vision. But his was a receptive genius, nearer to woman than man; he created but little, he gave forth of the abundance of the

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vision of others, as he saw their various artistries and the craft of their hands. But he added little more. He summed up their essayings and advances along the development of art into a final completeness by creating a complex style that should combine all their splendours. He was the very child of the Italy of the age, which stood calculating her advance, and making an account of her achievement. He was in that measure greatly an academical—his vision was the vision of the Renaissance that created him as its collector of her significances. His genius and exquisite sensitiveness to his atmosphere made him a superb instrument.

I have said that he was receptive rather than creative, of the feminine rather than the masculine in his sensing. His portraits, whether by himself, or Viti, or Bazzi il Sodoma, or others, show him frail and delicate of feature to effeminacy. A great authority on the study of the human being as an animal, that they call by the heathenish name of anthropologist, on being handed a cast of Raphael's skull, took it to be the skull of a woman.

So did his art fitly give utterance to sweetness and grace rather than strength and dramatic power. In the frescoes of the Stanze and Loggie at the Vatican he gave forth all the greatest that was in him; and proved himself a superb illustrator. If any painter's art was "literary" it was Raphael's; he proved that great art has nothing to do with illustration or lack of illustration. He came into an Italy as pagan as it was Christian, and wholly neither; but rather Italy herself essaying to see herself, but unable to hear herself for the clap-trap of the ages.

Neither a supreme colourist nor a supreme draughtsman, his craftsmanship often smudgy and nerveless, the moment he attempted to rival the majesty of Michelangelo,

as in his *Entombment* in the Borghese Gallery at Rome, he revealed his innate academic vision and lack of life—his unvirile grip of the intensity and reality of life.

WHEREIN WE WALK WITH RAPHAEL, THE RADIANT CHILD OF FORTUNE AND APOSTLE OF GRACE

Raphael is a marked contrast to Leonardo da Vinci. If Leonardo's achievement be not as great as his genius, Raphael's achievement is his fullest capacity. Raphael knew naught of the mysteries. His gifts were exactly fitted to what genius he had. He always sang in tune—the tune dominates all his work. He is the master of Grace—Grace was his god. Of the sublime he rarely gives a hint. He was incapable of terror, of sternness, of the tragic, of drama. He was the lord of Virginity. In his sedate and graceful work is no hint that the Baglioni were fighting in the streets of Perugia, no hint that the plains of Ravenna were red with blood. Raphael sees life as a May Day festival in a sumptuous church. His quality is Sweetness. He uttered not his age, but himself. A gentle, modest man, free from jealousies, obliging and kindly of habit, he bound all men to him by his blithe courtesy.

Giulio Pippi, better known as Giulio Romano (1492-1546), whose works are often credited to his master, as in the *Madonna with the Infant Christ and St. John* at the National Gallery in London, developed all those qualities of decline which threatened Renaissance art even in Raphael's achievement. Going to Mantua three years after the death of Raphael, he painted the frescoes in Federigo Gonzaga's palace which are his finest works. Raphael himself had little to add to the creative development of art; he was a mighty gleaner, with superb genius for gathering into one statement the varied activities of his forerunners. But Giulio Romano and his fellow-pupils brought no new vision to art whatsoever; they but em-

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ployed the prescription that Raphael had written, and were wholly academic, which is to say decadent.

It is the habit of the literary, of those who essay to understand the significance of art from the historic or æsthetic or other theoretic attitude, as the professor and the critic, to see only in the achievement of the ages certain technical superficialities. The most pronounced and dogged conclusion, by constant reiteration now passed into an æsthetic creed, is that Raphael and Michelangelo having completed the utterance of art in Italy, Italian art fell into utter decadence.

It happened to do no such thing, as we shall see.

As a matter of fact, the academic vision which formed so large a part of Raphael's art, and *which is the only real decay in art*, did become the sole gift to his pupils. It is true also, though not fully recognised, that this evil, largely due to Raphael, did exert a baleful influence throughout the coming ages. The stupendous genius of Michelangelo, and the vogue which grew about the weaker art of Raphael, became a curse for centuries to all artistic endeavour—a curse compelled upon the artists by the critics and "æsthetic" writers, as I shall show. But of that more later.

We are come to the art of one who stands for all that is sublime, gigantic, stupendous in Italian art—who by the grandeur of his conception, of his design, and his mastery of the human form, for the high emotions aroused by the sense of immensity, stands head and shoulders above the whole achievement of his race—Michelangelo Buonarroti.

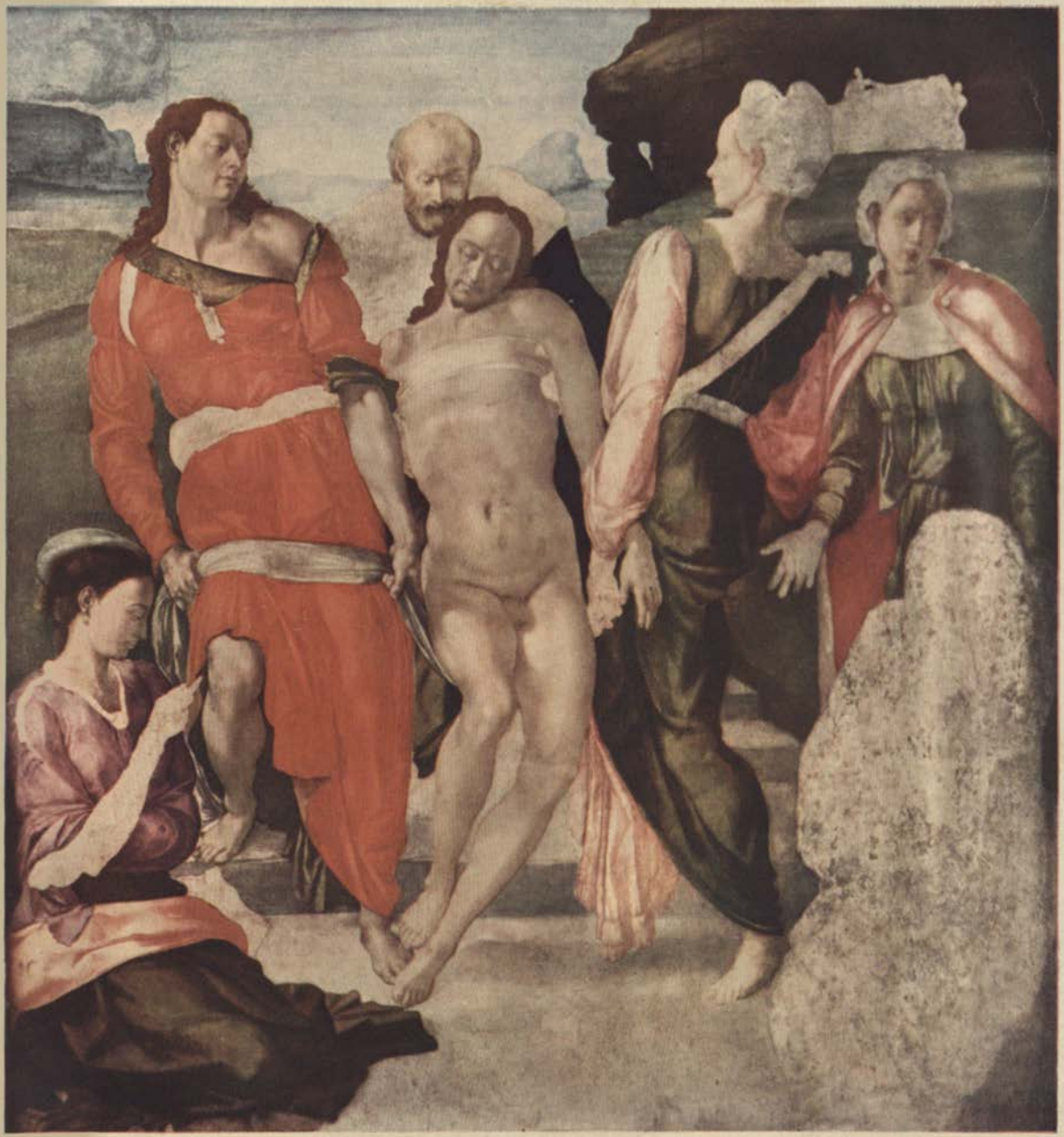
XXV

MICHELANGELO

"THE ENTOMBMENT"

(National Gallery)

This masterly work is of enormous interest to the art-world as showing the methods by which the giant of Italy wrought his undying masterpieces. The darkness of the Sistine Chapel makes it difficult to reproduce in colour the supreme works of his genius in painting.



CHAPTER XXIII

WHEREIN THERE PASSES BY, IN THE STREETS OF ROME, UNHAILED, THE GIANT OF THE RENAISSANCE

MICHELANGELO
1475 – 1564

WHEREIN THERE PASSES BY, IN THE STREETS OF ROME, UNHAILED, THE GIANT OF THE RE-NAISSANCE

MICHELANGELO was the son of Ludovico Buonarroti Simone, a Florentine of consequence, since he was Governor (*podestà*) of Chiusi and Caprese, thereto appointed by Lorenzo de' Medici but a few months before his child was born, as Messer Ludovico Buonarroti's own diary bears witness in the year 1475: "To-day there was born unto me a male child, whom I have named Michelagnolo. He saw the light at Caprese, whereof I am Podestà, on Monday morning, 6th March, between four and five o' the clock." So it came by a strange whim of fortune that the child, destined to become the supreme giant of the Renaissance, was born under the shadow of the Sasso della Verna, where St. Francis of Assisi had seen visions, not in the Florence that was the Athens of the Renaissance, wherein Paganism was a-riot and triumphant.

Michelangelo was reputed by his pupils, Vasari and Condivi, to be close kin of the noble house of the Counts of Canossa, and he shared their belief in his aristocratic birth; gentle he was by blood, of ancient Florentine stock through both father and mother, if no kin of the Canossas. Ludovico Buonarroti, the father, held his post for a year, after which he returned to Settignano village, which over-

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looks Florence from amidst its vines, to the ancient home of the Buonarroti amid the olives. The small child's horoscope was cast before the move, the astrologer prophesying that the stars had revealed for the little fellow's destiny that he was "to perform wonders with mind and hands."

Now Settignano was the home of the stone-masons and workers in marble, and Michelangelo himself, in after years, used to jest that from his foster-mother, a stone-mason's wife, he had sucked the craving for sculpture in his milk as a babe. The mallet and chisel and bits of marble were the toys of his childhood. By ten he could employ his tools with skill that outdid his foster-father, and his play-time was given to chalk and charcoal and the copying of such decorations in stone as he could find—those were busy days for the stone-carvers of Settignano, where her hundreds of workers in stone were hard put to it to carry out the orders of the merchant-princes who were rivalling Lorenzo the Magnificent in the raising of splendid palaces in Florence.

The sight of the stone being hewn into living shapes fired the art in the lad. But the father, Ludovico Buonarroti, had the modern genteel contempt of the Respectable towards the practice of art. Young Michelangelo, torn out of the village, was sent to a grammar-school in Florence, out of sound of the music of hammer and chisel ringing upon marble. But the schoolmaster, like the father, found the rod of no avail—the boy sought his comrades amongst the pupils of the Florentine artists, bending all his will to the joying in art. Of his chief boy-friends was Francesco Granacci, who was working in Ghirlandaio's studio, who lent the eager lad drawings to copy, and would take him to the great man's studio to see the latest sensation. The pursuit of learning was soon a

farce, though the art-despising father flogged the lad to keep him from straying into art's ways. However, Ludovico at last shrugged his shoulders at his son's vulgar tastes, and at thirteen Michelangelo entered the studio of the most highly reputed painter in Florence of that day, being apprenticed to Ghirlandaio on the 1st of April 1488. As he was to receive a small wage during his three years, he was probably already a capable lad. He at once began to astound his master by his realistic force, grew rapidly in craftsmanship, and soon the "child of such tender years" drew from Ghirlandaio the famous remark: "This boy knows more than I do." Whether he learnt much from his master, who is reputed early to have grown jealous of him, he varied the menial duties of an artist's apprentice by re-drawing Ghirlandaio's cartoons on to the walls of the Church of Santa Maria Novella, painting draperies, and courageously correcting his master's drawing as he re-drew from the cartoons on to the wall. When it is realised that the unfinished *Madonna and Child with the infant John the Baptist and Angels* at the National Gallery was wrought by this boy between the age of thirteen and sixteen, during his apprenticeship, it is small wonder that Ghirlandaio realised that he had nothing to teach the lad.

WHEREIN THERE PASSES BY, IN THE STREETS OF ROME, UNHAILED, THE GIANT OF THE RE-NAISSANCE

Now it so chanced that Lorenzo the Magnificent had collected into the gardens of the Medici at San Marco much antique sculpture with the intention of raising the Florentine achievement from the neglect that had fallen since Donatello had passed away, and he made Donatello's foreman, one Bertoldo, keeper, to instruct such youths as cared to study there. Ghirlandaio, asked by Lorenzo to choose from his apprentices such as he considered the most promising, sent his two most brilliant pupils, Francesco

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Granacci and Michelangelo. And here it was that Michelangelo discovered his career. Steeped in the Hellenic spirit, the art of sculpture was revealed to him through the tradition of Donatello; for Bertoldo, his teacher in sculpture, though old and unable to work, had had the high gifts to finish the great pulpits of San Lorenzo, begun by Donatello. Under Bertoldo, and in such an atmosphere, the lad increased rapidly in skill; his first sculpture, *The Mask of a grinning Faun*, caught the eye of Lorenzo the Magnificent, who forthwith persuaded the lad's father to let the youth go to his palace, where he gave him a good room, and treated him like a son. Living the life of the courtier, in intimate friendship with the family of the reigning sovereign of Florence, the young fellow was soon the prey to a secret, hopeless, but overwhelming passion for the beautiful Luigia de' Medici, who was to live so short a span, dying in 1494. Seated at the prince's table, where the lad heard the converse of the greatest of the age, the poet Angelo Poliziano one day suggested the *Battle of the Centaurs and Lapithae* to the fifteen-year-old youngster, who thereupon set to work upon the low-relief, his first masterpiece, revealing a power, a freedom and originality, a sense of life and action, and a keen knowledge of the human body, that are close upon a miracle. His bold vision and his original genius at once asserted themselves.

It was about this time that the serious youth was much impressed by the preaching of Savonarola.

The youth was now definitely bent on the career of a sculptor, but he gave many hours of his day to drawing —working, like most of his comrades, from the frescoes of Masaccio in the Brancacci Chapel of the church of the Carmine; and there it was that, being frankly criticised by Michelangelo, one of his fellow-students—the proud and

ill-conditioned Piero Torrigiani—became so furious that he savagely struck Michelangelo a brutal blow upon the nose, which smashed the cartilage and disfigured him for life, adding ruggedness to his already rugged countenance. But under the young fellow's outer ruggedness and grimness lurked an exquisite and sensitive soul. The bully Torrigiani was banished from Florence, only to be recalled on Michelangelo's earnest pleading to Lorenzo on his behalf.

WHEREIN THERE PASSES BY, IN THE STREETS OF ROME, UNHAILED, THE GIANT OF THE RENAISSANCE

The blow was the beginning of uglier blows by Fortune. The young fellow had scarce completed his *Battle of the Centaurs and Lapithae* when, on the 8th of April 1492, to his overwhelming grief, his beloved friend and generous patron, Lorenzo the Magnificent, died—a grief not only to Michelangelo but to all Italy, to whom his death was a public calamity. The youth, overborne with grief, left his three-years home and returned to his father's house. His art saved him. Buying a large piece of marble, he hewed a Hercules from it, which was set up in the Strozzi Palace, until the siege of Florence in 1530, when, bought by Giovanni Battista della Palla, it was sent as a gift to Francis I., King of France—and has now wholly vanished.

Setting himself doggedly to a knowledge of anatomy, he won the friendship of the Prior of Santo Spirito, who gave him a room wherein he dissected the bodies of executed criminals.

Michelangelo's boy-companion, Piero de' Medici, on succeeding his father, Lorenzo the Magnificent, called Michelangelo back to the palace. But the proud and insolent son had none of his father's great gifts. His coarse manners and vulgar tastes soon had him foul of the people. Michelangelo was the last to bear with him. A tasteless boast of the young prince that he had two powerful

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men in his service, Michelangelo and a Spanish groom, deeply humiliated the artist, who found himself classed with such a fellow; and, too proud to suffer such treatment, and foreseeing the early fall of Piero, Michelangelo left Florence early in 1494 for Venice. Unable to get work, he went on to Bologna, which town he entered only to find himself charged with the offence of being without a passport, under a heavy fine, and with empty pockets. He was saved out of the trouble by Gian Francesco Aldovrandi, a gentleman of the town, who not only paid the fine but took him to his home and treated him with great honour. In the November of this year Piero de' Medici had to fly from Florence. It was whilst with Aldovrandi that Michelangelo completed an unfinished statue of San Petronio, and carved the statuette of a kneeling angel holding a candlestick for the shrine of the saint in the church of San Domenico, which works were to prove so disastrous to his stay in Bologna; for the craftsmen of the place, bitterly complaining that the young fellow was taking the bread out of their mouths, became threatening, and Michelangelo hurriedly returned to Florence in the spring of 1495. Michelangelo came back to Florence to find the beautiful Luigia de' Medici dead some months past, to find also that the fiery and passionate preaching of Savonarola had set up popular government. The Dominican was a man after the young artist's heart. Overwhelming in energy, fiercely confident in his faith, violent in act, the priest's gloomy forebodings and eloquence roused the young fellow to enthusiasm. Michelangelo, but twenty, was made a member of the General Council of Citizens. He was soon at work on a statue of the *Youthful St. John the Baptist*, by some said to be the one at Berlin, which he wrought for Lorenzo di Pier Francesco, cousin to the fugitive Piero de'

Medici. He thereby won the admiration of Lorenzo, and his close friendship; and it was Lorenzo who, finding Michelangelo at work on his famous *Sleeping Cupid*, and struck by its Greek spirit, persuaded him to bury it, and thereby complete its antique aspect. Michelangelo, to test its likeness to the antique achievement, did so. Thereafter sent to Rome, it was bought by Raffaelo Riario, Cardinal di San Giorgio, as a perfect example of the Greek genius. The jest was to lead Michelangelo to Rome. The Cardinal, finding out the facts, which the young artist took small pains to hide, was furious at being befooled; but, on cooling, came to the shrewd decision that the artist who could so deceive him by his skill was no mean sculptor, and forthwith sent one of his gentlemen to Florence to bring him back with him to Rome. The messenger, finding his way to Michelangelo, soon had the story of the Greek masterpiece, and found the young sculptor eager to leave for Rome—he was living suspect of his fellows in Florence, as was inevitable from his close friendship with the Medici. So, on a day at the end of the June of 1496, in his twenty-first year, he entered the Rome of his desire for the first time. The last heard of the *Sleeping Cupid* was at the sack of Urbino in 1592, when it became a part of the booty of Cæsar Borgia, who gave it to the Marchioness of Mantua.

WHEREIN THERE PASSES BY, IN THE STREETS OF ROME, UNHAILED, THE GIANT OF THE RENAISSANCE

Michelangelo was to find disappointment in coming to Rome. The Cardinal's sole order was for a cartoon of *Saint Francis receiving the Stigmata*, that the Cardinal's barber might paint it! As luck would have it, a wealthy Roman, one Jacopo Galli, ordered a *Bacchus*, now at Florence, and a *Cupid*, said to be the one at the South Kensington Museum. The half-drunken *Bacchus* was to lead to a

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strange commission. Vastly admired, it drew the envoy of the King of France, Cardinal De la Groslaye de Villiers, to order the group of *Our Lady holding the dead Christ in her Arms*, as the contract made on the 26th of August 1498 shows, and "that the said Michelangelo shall furnish the said work within one year." This would seem to be the superb *Pietà* at St. Peter's in Rome. The terms of the contract—and contracts are not greatly given to flattery—prove that Michelangelo's repute in this, his twenty-third year, was already very great.

But the young fellow's troubles and embarrassments were begun. His father became involved in heavy money difficulties. Michelangelo's affection for and generosity to his family glow in his letters. He pinched and wanted that he might send home every piece of money he earned. He provided for his three younger brothers—one of whom, Giovan Simone Buonarroti, was a ne'er-do-weel who was to give him continual anxiety. Behind the rugged and stern outer man, Michelangelo hid a tender and unselfish soul. The poor way in which he lived—that every letter home might carry money with it—not only was a sad drain on his body, but compelled upon the rising sculptor a poverty of appearance that did him no good amongst his patrons. It even drew from his father the famous letter in which he is urged not to stint himself, since "if you fall ill (which God forbid), you are a lost man. Above all things, never wash; have yourself rubbed down, but never wash!"

It was the spring of 1501, he being twenty-six, that Michelangelo again set foot in Florence, famous, and hailed as the first sculptor of his age. Of the orders that poured in upon him was that from Cardinal Piccolomini, afterwards Pope Pius III., for fifteen statues of saints for the

Duomo of Siena. But the young fellow had set eyes upon a huge block of marble which had been abandoned as useless, after some work upon it by a mediocre fellow, in the Opera del Duomo at Florence; and Michelangelo flung himself with wonted energy at the task of hewing a colossal statue from it. Two years of strenuous work saw the maimed marble yield forth one of the mightiest masterpieces of sculpture—the immortal *David*. The colossal statue, *Il Gigante* as they called it, was, on the 14th day of the May of 1504, Michelangelo's twenty-ninth year, dragged to the Piazza della Signoria, and set up there by the Florentines; and there it stood until 1873, when it was taken into the Academy. In the riots of 1527 the left arm was broken by a stone, but Vasari and Cecchino de' Rossi gathered the pieces, and restored them to the arm some sixteen years later.

WHEREIN THERE PASSES BY, IN THE STREETS OF ROME, UNHAILED, THE GIANT OF THE RENAISSANCE

A gigantic *David* by Michelangelo was also wrought in bronze, in 1502, which the Florentine Republic gave to the French statesman Florimon Robertet; which, though it stood a hundred years in the château of Bury, near Blois, has wholly vanished.

It was whilst at work at the great *David* that Michelangelo also wrought the two circular marble low-reliefs of the *Madonna and Child with the Infant St. John*, now, the one at Florence, the other at the Royal Academy in London.

Of the twelve colossal statues of the Apostles that he started upon in the April of 1503, one to be finished each year, Michelangelo only worked upon the incomplete *St. Matthew*, now in the Academy at Florence. But he painted the round panel (*tondo*) of *The Holy Family* for a merchant-prince of Florence, one Agnolo Doni (that same Doni whose portrait was painted by Raphael), now at the

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Uffizi—the only easel picture which can with certainty be said to be by him, unless it be the unfinished *Entombment* in the National Gallery in London, not only a superb treasure, but vastly interesting as showing his method of painting in tempera on panel—revealing his underpainting on a green ground.

It was in the August of 1504, the year of the *David* being set up in Florence, that the Gonfaloniere of the Republic, his friend and protector Piero Soderini, paid the young artist the high compliment of setting him to the decoration of a wall in the Sala del Gran Consiglio of the Palazzo Vecchio, opposite to the wall on which the great Leonardo da Vinci was engaged. Leonardo da Vinci, at the very height of his career, was making the cartoon of the *Fight for the Standard* at the battle of Anghiari, at which, in 1440, Florence overthrew Niccolò Piccinino. Michelangelo chose an event in the war with Pisa. We have Benvenuto Cellini's evidence, who copied the cartoon in 1513, nine years later—for he writes of it, and his witness is of supreme value: "Michelangelo showed a number of foot-soldiers, who, the season being summer, had gone to bathe in the Arno. He drew them at the moment that the alarm is sounded; and the men, all naked, rush to arms. So superb is their action, that nothing of ancient or of modern art lives which touches the same lofty height of excellence; and, as I have already said, the design of the great Leonardo was also most admirably beautiful. These two cartoons stood, one in the Palace of the Medici, the other in the hall of the Pope. So long as they remained, they were the school of the world."

As cartoons they began and ended; they were destined never to be painted upon the walls. Leonardo da Vinci began painting a group of horsemen on the wall, but

abandoned its further painting for other schemes. Michelangelo was called to Rome in the early part of 1505 by Pope Julius II., and eagerly departed. Benvenuto Cellini copied Michelangelo's cartoon just in time; for, almost immediately afterwards, a jealous and wretched painter, one Baccio Bandinelli, destroyed it.

The Albertina Gallery holds a sketch of it amongst its famous treasures; and a fine copy of it, in monochrome painting, is at Holkham Hall, the seat of the Earl of Leicester.

The day that Michelangelo left Florence on his eager second journey to Rome, at the call of the Pope, he bade farewell for ever to such peace of mind and happiness as had been his.

WHEREIN THERE PASSES BY, IN THE STREETS OF ROME, UNHAILED, THE GIANT OF THE RENAISSANCE

Michelangelo went back to Rome to meet, in Pope Julius II., a man in many ways his own equal—in astounding energy, boundless ambition, each proud in his own strength, passionate in temper, brooking no opposition, prone to sudden outbursts of fury when thwarted, generous, forthright, and of great essence.

Raphael has left us his famous portrait of the grey-bearded old Pope, seated in his chair. The portrait of Michelangelo at the Uffizi holds hint that the Pope had met his match.

Julius II. galled the young sculptor by months of delay, then decided upon a magnificent monument to himself, to be raised during his lifetime. So, at thirty, in an astoundingly rapid time, Michelangelo placed the design before the delighted Pope, who straightway sent him off to Carrara to quarry the marble; and so eager was the sculptor to begin upon his huge task, that, in the eight months at Carrara, he blocked out two of the figures for the Tomb.

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Back in Rome by November, he started upon the great Tomb in the large workshop of the home by the Vatican that the Pope put at his service, who had a drawbridge thrown across from the Corridore to the sculptor's rooms that he might visit him whilst at work, and who poured favours upon him. The Tomb was never to be completed in its vast original design ; indeed, source as it was of many of Michelangelo's great masterpieces, it was to become a curse in his life.

The huge monument, on a base of 34 by 23 feet, and raised, roughly speaking, as a cube and a half, was too large to set into St. Peter's Church, whereupon the dauntless Julius promptly ordered the rebuilding of the church on a vast and magnificent scale by Bramante. All looked smiling for Michelangelo, who flung himself into his beloved task with hot enthusiasm. But he was to suffer chill. There came a day when a load of marble being sent from Carrara, and the Pope being engaged in affairs of State, Michelangelo paid the freight and porterage out of his own pocket. His efforts to see the Pope, and to get the money repaid, were met by cunning evasions of the Pope to see him, and at last by an order that Michelangelo was not to be allowed into the presence of His Holiness, who was deeply involved in money difficulties over his wars. The sculptor was not of the temper to brook the treachery. His pride deeply wounded, Michelangelo burst into a fury of passion, and with a contemptuous "henceforward the Pope must look for me elsewhere if he wants me," he got to horse and made for Florence, where he brooded on his wrongs, disdainful of the five pursuing messengers sent in hot pursuit by the Pope.

Thus the curtain came down on the first act of that "tragedy of the tomb" that was to darken Michelangelo's

life. Well might Michelangelo write, "I am thy drudge, and have been from my youth . . . yet of my dear time's waste thou think'st no ill; the more I toil, the less I move thy pity. Once 'twas my hope to raise me by thy height." Neither the threats of the Pope nor the anxious urging of the sculptor's friend, Piero Soderini, who was thoroughly alarmed by the repeated orders of the Pope to send back the artist by fair means or by force, could move Michelangelo. But, meanwhile, Julius II., having subdued Perugia, re-entered Bologna in triumph on the 11th of the November of 1506; and was scarce settled in the town before he sent to the Signoria of Florence demanding that Michelangelo should be sent to Bologna. Michelangelo went, "like a man with a halter about his neck"; only to find himself hailed with rejoicing by the Pope, who straightway, before he left for Rome, set him to work upon the great bronze statue of himself to be set up in front of the church of San Petronio—that statue, finished in the February of 1508, which showed the Pope seated, with one hand raised, and of which the Pope asked, when it was set up, whether he was supposed to be blessing or cursing the people of Bologna, and was met by Michelangelo's deft reply: "Your Holiness is threatening this people, if it be not wise"—that statue which, wrought out of a year and a half of Michelangelo's genius, was flung down by the Bolognese when Bentivogli drove the Papal Legate out of the town, when the bronze was melted down and cast into a huge cannon that the jesting citizens nicknamed "La Giulia."

WHEREIN THERE PASSES BY, IN THE STREETS OF ROME, UNHAILED, THE GIANT OF THE RENAISSANCE

Michelangelo, back in Florence in March, and relieved by his father on the 13th of that month in 1508, his thirty-third year, from parental authority, was for settling in his native city, and orders were pouring in upon him, when the Pope again called him to Rome.

A HISTORY

THE GOLDEN AGE

Michelangelo set foot in Rome for the second time, his heart fixed on the completion of the great Tomb, only to find that cunning rivals had worked upon the aged Pontiff's superstition of the ill-luck in having a tomb made during his lifetime—covering all risk of being considered jealous by maliciously suggesting Michelangelo's painting the vault of the Sistine Chapel instead—not realising his hidden great qualities as painter. It is grown into a habit to pooh-pooh the likelihood of this motive. But there is not a shred of solid evidence to disprove it. The whole Renaissance was befouled through and through with bitter rivalries, that flinched neither from scruple nor murder to attain the vilest ends. And in no place was this vileness more murderous and deadly than in the home of the Popes. It reached to, and sullied, the very High Altar of its beautiful creed. Michelangelo stated the truth mildly when he wrote that "all the disagreements which I have had with Pope Julius have been brought about by the envy of Bramante and of Raphael of Urbino," who were the cause of his monument not being finished during his lifetime.

Michelangelo hesitated. He did not consider himself a painter. He knew nothing of the craft of fresco-painting. He felt unfitted for the task. But the Pope doggedly pressed. So it came that on the 10th of the May of 1508, with great reluctance, Michelangelo entered upon the work of painting *the Decorations of the Sistine Chapel*, which are amongst the supreme artistic achievements of the hand and brain of mortal men.

The Sistine Chapel was built for the especial use of the Popes; in it takes place the scrutiny of the ballot for the election of the Pope by the Conclave of Cardinals.

He faced a colossal task; and once having entered upon it, he flinched from nothing. To aid him in the craftsman-

ship of fresco, he called in six Florentine painters, among them his friends Francesco Granacci and Giuliano Bugiardini, who, however, could not reach the majestic ideals that Michelangelo set them; he bore with them until the January of 1509; sent them away; and, blotting out what painting they had done, shut himself up in the chapel to tackle with his own hands his vast enterprise. Alone, painting upwards upon the great vault of the ceiling in a strained position, the fresco dripping on to his face, distressed in mind and with terrible fatigue of the cramped body, without a friend with whom to hold communion, scarce giving himself time for food, he had created by the end of the October of 1509, in about nine months, hundreds of figures, some ten feet in stature; since we know that the impetuous Pope insisted on having this portion of the work uncovered on the 1st of November 1509, that he might see it, though not complete; and three years afterwards, on the 1st of November 1512, at the hot insistence of the Pope, who had already threatened to have him flung down from the scaffolding if he did not hasten the work, and at last struck him with his cane, Michelangelo uncovered it, though unfinished, to the Pope's wild admiration. The whole of Rome, led by the Pope, who indeed rushed to the chapel "before the dust raised by the taking down of the scaffolding had settled," flocked to see the great achievement which is the supreme work of the Italian Renaissance, the sublime and majestic utterance of its art.

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Michelangelo complained that the impatience of the Pope prevented his finishing his work as he would have desired. Yet the vast performance could scarce have been bettered. Taking a stupendous subject, this man, who alone in all his age had the power to utter that subject with art prodigious enough to pronounce its sublime music,

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wrought the full intensity of it all with a tragic force with which no other man has ever been gifted. In those few years, working alone, he achieved an intensity of emotional utterance in which he gave forth the significance of the Creation of the World, the Fall of Man, the Flood, the Second Entry of Sin into the World, in nine great spaces upon the centre of the ceiling, which have only been equalled in sustained power and dignity of utterance by the English translators of the Bible. Continuing his vast drama, he uttered the need for Salvation, foretold by the Prophets and Sibyls, the majestic dignity of whose figures are the wonder of the ages; and he wrought throughout his scheme the great groups of the ancestors of the Mother of Christ. He painted twenty superb nude figures of Athletes, of which any one would have established the genius of any painter. He had set his heart on the creation of the great Tomb: baffled in his vast ambition, he put forth his hand to do in painting what he had been denied in sculpture, and, treating the vaulted ceiling of the Sistine Chapel as though he carved it with the chisel of his astounding craftsmanship in sculpture, he raised in paint a mighty temple towards the heavens—the simplicity of sculpture is over it all, the human figure he glorified in paint employed with a hand that wrought the will of a sculptor's eyes. And he who looks upon this wondrous work of a man's hand may realise, as though Michelangelo had created it in solid marble, what that Tomb would have been which he was thwarted in wholly achieving—may guess in some fashion what were the deeps of the grief that tortured the soul of this genius of a man whose mighty poem in carven marble was buried like a splendid dream in the baffled hopes that were flung to the ground in the "tragedy of the tomb."

OF PAINTING

WHEREIN THERE PASSES BY, IN THE STREETS OF ROME, UNHAILED, THE GIANT OF THE RE-NAISSANCE

Pupil of Ghirlandaio he may have been, but one cannot help but be struck by the fact that it was to Leonardo da Vinci, and above all to Signorelli, that Michelangelo owed the largest debt of what revelation in painting had been vouchsafed to him.

In 1512 Soderini, the old friend of Michelangelo in Florence, fled from that city, leaving the gates open to Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici.

Pope Julius II. must have had foreboding of the coming of the Great Reaper, as he impatiently hurried Michelangelo to that uncovering of his masterwork in the November of 1512: within four months his violent spirit and fierce energy of will lay serene and stilled, on the 21st of the following February of 1513. Mayhap he felt the Reaper near: just before death came to him he ordered Michelangelo to finish the great Tomb, appointing his nephew, Cardinal Aginense, and Cardinal Santi Quattro, to see to the completion of the great design; but they, baffled by the expense, caused Michelangelo to reduce the scheme, who thereupon recast it, and with feverish eagerness and delight set himself to its completion. It was not to be. Michelangelo's friend and playfellow at the Court of the Medici, Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, was elected Pope after Julius II.; and as soon as the great celebrations of his enthronement as Pope Leo X. were done, he set Michelangelo, to whose bitter protests he would not listen, to decorate the façade of San Lorenzo in Florence with sculptures; so "Michelangelo left the Tomb, and betook himself, weeping, to Florence."

Indeed, his grief must have been great. By the June of this year of 1515, he had finished the *Moses* and the *Captives* in marble, and the "relief" panels were ready for the casting in bronze. The two years of his precious life

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and genius that were now wasted to the world in sending him to quarry the marble for the façade of San Lorenzo would have seen the making of the great Tomb. Nor was the façade to reach completion. The Pope's only brother, Giuliano de' Medici, and his nephew, Lorenzo, dying, he freed Michelangelo on the 10th of the March of 1520 from his bond to decorate the façade, and ordered him instead to build a new sacristy to their memory, and raise a monument to them therein.

Seizing the opportunity to fulfil a seven-years old promise to a Roman patron, Metello Vari, for a nude Christ bearing the Cross, he sent to Rome in the summer of 1521 the majestic *Risen Christ*, now in the church of the Minerva, the hands and feet being left in the rough to prevent damage during transport—which were finished by the crude workmanship of Pietro Urbino, and mauled in the doing. But Leo x.'s great patronage of art was to last all too short a while—he died on the 1st of December in 1521, being succeeded by the pious Dutchman who vowed the Sistine Chapel "nothing but a room full of naked people." His secret desire to have it whitewashed was balked by death; and 1523 saw Giulio de' Medici reign in his stead as Clement VII. The following year, Michelangelo, having finished the new sacristy at San Lorenzo, began the Medicean tombs to be placed therein, harassed the while by the building of a library, also, that the Pope urged upon him.

Then fell a blow upon Rome. The disaster of the battle of Pavia saw Francis I. make a league with the Sforza of Milan, Venice, Florence, and Pope Clement VII. against Charles V., which bred nothing but further disasters, ending in the renegade Connétable de Bourbon, with his horde of German and Spanish soldiers-of-fortune, taking

and pillaging Rome in 1527—the Pope being besieged for nine months in the Castle of Saint Angelo. The Florentines promptly shook off the rule of the Medici. Michelangelo flung himself with hot enthusiasm into the struggle for liberty. In the following year of 1528 he lost his favourite and beloved brother, Buonarroto, in the plague. A year thereafter Charles v. concluded the Peace of Barcelona with Pope Clement VII., making it a condition that the Pope should again set up the rule of the Medici over Florence. The citizens, preparing for a desperate resistance, made Michelangelo the Commissary-General of Defence, and it was the skill with which he fortified the city that enabled Florence to defy the attacks of the Imperial troops for a whole year, until the August of 1530, when the treachery of Malatesta Baglioni, their commander, brought about the fall of the city. On the return of Alessandro de' Medici in triumph to Florence, Michelangelo only saved his head by hiding in the bell-tower of San Nicolò beyond the Arno, until the fury of revenge was quieted. During the siege he had worked upon the tombs of the Medici for the sacristy, besides painting the panel of *Leda and the Swan*, which he gave to his pupil Antonio Mini, with many cartoons and drawings, as a dowry for his two sisters. Being sold to the King of France, it hung at Fontainebleau until Louis XIII.'s day, when one of the ministers ordered its destruction as an indecent picture, but it was said to have been hidden away.

WHEREIN THERE PASSES BY, IN THE STREETS OF ROME, UNHAILED, THE GIANT OF THE RENAISSANCE

The Pope's anger at the rebel sculptor soon cooled, and, thanks to the Papal envoy at Florence, Baccio Valori, to whom the grateful sculptor gave his statue of *Apollo*, now at Florence, Michelangelo was soon at work again upon the Medicean tombs. But, vexed by the troubles that ever dogged his sublime art, torn between Julius the Second's

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nephew, the Duke of Urbino, who demanded the completion of the great Tomb, on the one hand, and Pope Clement VII., who vowed excommunication if he ceased work upon the Medicean tomb in the sacristy at Florence, he at any rate first finished the wondrous statue of the *Madonna nursing the Child Christ*, who is seen straddling across her knee.

The superb *tombs of Giuliano and Lorenzo* de' Medici for the sacristy at Florence, each of the princes arrayed like warriors of antiquity, seated in a niche above a sarcophagus on which two figures recline—*Lorenzo* in sorrowful meditation above the great reclining *Evening* and *Dawn* (the *Dawn* being finished in 1531, soon after the fall of Florence), *Giuliano* seated above the great reclining *Night* and *Day*—are amongst the mightiest achievements of all art. At their ending, in 1534, Michelangelo was to leave Florence, never to return. The figures of the Medicean tombs give forth his passionate love of liberty, his tragic longing for it, and his gloomy resentment at its loss to Florence, clear as though some vasty music sounded the tragic intensity of his feeling. His unfinished bust of *Brutus* in the Bargello repeats it—his proud and wide-ranging spirit, his independent and lofty soul irked by the petty tyrannies of Alessandro de' Medici.

Michelangelo was now on the edge of his sixtieth year. Raphael was dead fourteen years, Leonardo fifteen years, Andrea del Sarto three years, Correggio was to die in the following year. Michelangelo saw Italy in wreckage. He was to live through thirty more years and see worse befall. He saw Florence blotted out. He saw the Inquisition set up and the Italian spirit die under the heel of Spain.

He set foot in Rome again, to find that Pope

Clement VII. had been dead a couple of days, and that a Farnese, Paul III., had been elected in his stead. Michelangelo came to Rome under the bond to make the tomb of Julius II. of one façade only, using the marble already carved for the cube of the tomb, carving six statues by his own hand, and employing other artists to complete the rest of the work. Again he was to be balked. Paul III.—he of the cunning of a fox, who made himself infamous to indulge his vicious bastard son—at once made him chief architect, sculptor, and painter to the Vatican, and heedless of his prayers and beseechings, set him to the task of painting the end wall of the Sistine Chapel. The doors of the Sistine Chapel closed again upon Michelangelo, not to open again until the Christmas of 1541, when "to the admiration of Rome and the whole world" was uncovered his great *Last Judgment*. Baffled thirty-three years gone by, at thirty-three, in the full strength of early manhood, he had begun the painting of the great ceiling in the Sistine with the *Creation*; at sixty-four, after seven or eight years' prodigious toil, he gave to the world, as the last act of the vast drama, the Doom of all created things—the Destiny that leads to the awful majesty of the Day of Wrath and Judgment, wrought with the gloomy tragic intensity of a Dante.

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There is a grim irony in the fact that whilst the work was received with enthusiasm by the greatest artists of the age, the base and indecent scribbler, Pietro Aretino, should have led the enemies of the mighty genius to condemn it as indecent, owing to the number of its nudities! Michelangelo refused to paint any draperies. And it is not the smallest part of the gross hypocrisy of the times that, a few years later, Paul IV. got Michelangelo to allow Daniele da Volterra partly to drape many of the figures—whereby that

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worthy man rendered himself immortal by the nickname of "The Maker of Breeches—Il Braghettone." The smoke of altar-candles has done its best to blacken the master's work, and blot out the shame of "The Maker of Breeches," but even though the majesty of it all shall perish, our Breeches Maker shall live—the slave of the hypocrisies of a wondrous age and as wondrous a people. So, as ever, we see society grow prude as it grows vicious. Yet one remembers with a thrill of pleasure how, the Pope's master of the ceremonies, one Biagio, playing the shocked censor, Michelangelo painted him into the Hell, and, the indignant man complaining, the Pope wittily replied that, had it been Purgatory, he might have helped him, but in Hell was no redemption.

Luigia de' Medici had been dead forty years when Michelangelo, in his sixties, met the second woman who was to leave a profound impression upon his life and soul. Vittoria Colonna was the first woman of her age. The friendship of these two great spirits, lofty in their ideals, impelled by mutual admiration and liking, was the source of much of Michelangelo's song—to her he poured out his passion in several of his finest sonnets, as at her death, when he wrote, "Her soul that quickened mine hath sought the skies." It was a strange platonic passion—strange as the life of the man. Vittoria Colonna was the daughter of Fabrizio Colonna, and the inconsolable widow of the Marquis of Pescara, and about forty-two years of age. She formed a circle of celebrities about her.

The *Last Judgment* done, its mighty significance probably lost on all who beheld it beyond the mere talking about it, Paul III. hustled the artist to the painting of the side-walls of the Cappella Paolina. Close on seventy when he started upon it, and seventy-four when on the two

frescoes of *The Conversion of St. Paul* and *The Martyrdom of St. Peter* he used the brush for the last time, he owned at last that his powerful frame was surrendering its prodigious energy and strength—he confessed to Vasari that he did his last fresco "with great effort and fatigue." It may be that something of the fire had gone out of his body's force, as out of the wondrous significance of his mastery in art; but even whilst he painted these frescoes, he finished at last, forty years after he first designed its splendid intention, the modified design of the great tomb of Pope Julius II., in the church of San Pietro in Vincoli, that had been the tragedy of his artistic life. It was a sad belittling of his great design, but it gave us the great *Moses*, and the two astoundingly fine female figures of *Active* and *Contemplative Life*.

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His solemn pledge to the dead Pope fulfilled, Michelangelo fell into a heavier gloom; a profound Melancholy took him for her own. Wearied by the fierce plaguings of his career and destiny, wracked with religious gloom, yearning for peace and rest, but unable to thrust aside his innate energy, his famed sonnet proves that his art no longer satisfied him: "Painting nor sculpture now can lull to rest my soul, that turns to His great love on high." He was not to be allowed rest. The great church of St. Peter's, to the magnificent rebuilding of which the Pope Julius II. had set Bramante—to hold, with fitting splendour, Michelangelo's vast monument to him—had, at the death of Bramante, passed under the design of Raphael, at whose death it had passed to Antonio da Sangallo, who died in the October of 1546, the year after Michelangelo finished Julius II.'s reduced tomb. Michelangelo, still at work on the frescoes of the Cappella Paolina, was, in spite of his refusal, and his plea that architecture was not his art, so bullied and pestered into the business by Paul III., that he

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consented to become the architect of the great church of Catholic Christendom on condition of receiving no payment for it, since he was henceforth only desirous to practise his art as a devotional act.

It was shortly after his appointment as architect of St. Peter's that, in 1547, the romantic and beautiful friendship of Michelangelo and Vittoria Colonna was brought to an end by her death, which left Michelangelo "dazed as one bereft of sense."

Cancelling the alterations that had been made to Bramante's original design, Michelangelo designed, on absolute symmetry, Bramante's original Greek cross, so that the vast dominant note from within and without should be a great cupola. Destroying Sangallo's work, he put down all jobbery with a stern hand—increasing thereby the swarm of his enemies, who thenceforth intrigued night and day against him. But Paul III., who died in 1549, and Julius III. who reigned in his stead, knew full well that Michelangelo's art meant immortality for them. The vast pile rapidly arose under the mighty will of Michelangelo; all intrigues were brushed aside; and by 1557 the rugged old artist of eighty-two saw the huge cupola itself come to its beginnings. But at eighty-two, even the body of a Michelangelo knows the vigour of youth no longer. Unable now to direct the actual building, he set up the wooden model which may still be seen at the Vatican; and whilst his assistants worked from it, the rugged old man, from the windows of his house, watched by the hour together the mighty cupola begin to swell to roundness against the blue of the heavens.

But the twilight of his life was to bring gloom and bitter sorrow to Michelangelo. His two brothers died in Florence, and his nephew Lorenzo, son of his beloved

brother Buonarroto, alone remained to him of all his near kin. Then the loss of his faithful servant, Francesco Urbino, filled him with grief. But his restless and energetic will drove his hand to prodigious creation still—he planned the improvements on the Capitol—designed the church of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini — designed the monument to Giangiacomo de' Medici that Leone Leoni raised in Milan Cathedral—planned the changing of the Baths of Diocletian into the Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli—poured out sketches of palaces, statues, and the like for others to carry out. However, he knew joy in his nephew and that nephew's marriage. He was at least wealthy, and his habits were frugal. Sleeping little, and working at night upon his sculpturings, wearing a cap with a candle stuck in the front of it whereby to give him light, he lived his lonely life, dreaming art. Princes courted his society, the Count of Canossa was proud to claim him kin. The twilight of his old age was serene; he knew the affection that he had poured upon his kin. Yet his will was irked by the smallness of his endeavour—he poured forth in his famed sonnet his lament at the loss of his once vigorous creative force. The restless power of the man fought his ninety years. On the edge of ninety the old giant took his walks abroad careless of all weather. To his old friend Tiberio Calcagni's protest, meeting him on the 14th of February 1564 in the street, rain-drenched, he replies fiercely, "Let me be. I am ill, and can nowhere find rest." The next four days saw him crouched by the fire in an arm-chair, "oppressed with continual drowsiness." At last the old Adam rebels within him. He must shake off this sluggardy. He will go for a ride—he calls for his horse and tries to mount—he fails. He has not the strength. Without a word, he goes back again to the arm-chair, where,

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in the afternoon of the 18th day of the February of 1564, a little before five of the clock, the giant of the Italian Renaissance yielded up his mighty spirit, as though he slept, into eternity. Peace came to his troubled life only at its ending.

But the poor body was to be vexed with strife even dead. His nephew, Leonardo Buonarroti, reaching Rome some three days after Michelangelo's death, found Rome, which had made the dead man a citizen, passionately set upon his burial there. Michelangelo's dying wish, to be buried in his own city of Florence, they flatly refused, and would not allow his body to be moved. It is said that Michelangelo dead was smuggled out of Rome in a bale of merchandise, and so brought to Florence, to be buried amidst great pomp and solemnity in the church of Santa Croce. But the sublime group of the *Pietà*, wrought by Michelangelo's hand with intent for his own tomb, was never set thereon.

It was through the sublime genius of Michelangelo that the late Renaissance in Central Italy, which had found its chief home in Florence, discovered its supreme and mighty utterance. Michelangelo was the complete voice of the Florentine achievement. With Michelangelo and Raphael, the early fifteen-hundreds were to see art depart from Florence into Rome, and take up her habitation amongst the ruins; and, at the passing of Michelangelo, the ruins engulfed her, blotting her out.

Born in the same year as Fra Bartolommeo, he died on the edge of ninety, in 1564, forty-four years after Raphael had been laid in his grave, eighteen years after Raphael's chief disciple, Giulio Romano, died. When death took this giant of the Renaissance, the fifteen-hundreds had

passed into their second half-century. The Renaissance in Central Italy was dead.

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Michelangelo ever claimed the bays as a sculptor alone. Though poet, architect, and painter of astounding achievement, and reaching to vast significance in all things that he essayed, he signed his letters, even whilst he wrought the mighty masterpiece of his ceiling-paintings in the Sistine Chapel, as though in very arrogance of the knowledge of that in which lay his supreme power and his immortal fame, as *Michelangelo, sculptor.*

He stands forth, rugged, uncompromising, stern, honest, virile, as the mighty Seer of the Renaissance, like some ancient Hebrew prophet, reckless of all authority, bent on rousing mankind to the vast dignities with which the Creator has endowed them, scorning his fellows for concerning themselves with petty toys and vulgar brawls, when the heights lay before them for the conquering. He felt the grandeur of life, its sublime powers, its vast experience; and he uttered these majestic significances, gifted with an astounding craftsmanship that created a vast and awe-compelling art attune to the prodigious emotions that stirred within him, and which he wrought with a resonant and mighty music that compels homage.

Over all he wrought is a tragic gloom that utters itself in his sonnets as in his vasty art, whatsoever the craft he employed to utter that art—for his stern eyes saw the failure of Italy to reach to the splendid realm of Liberty that had stirred her to life. His eighty-nine years of storm-tossed living saw Italy a land of slaves, tied and bound under the heels of contemptible tyrannies; he saw his beloved Florence blotted out; he saw the arts decay; and he died in the bitter knowledge that sacerdotal despotism had slain liberal thought in the Church which was so dear

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to him, and which had created the knowledge it now feared.

Italy had been first amongst the nations in the new Awakening; and his dying eyes beheld that she was become the last—lying prostrate, her eager life gone out of her, at the gates of the New Life that she had unlocked to the world. He looked upon his people, seeing that the light shone before them, but they could not understand.

Steeped in the text of the Bible, the discourses of Plato, and the poems of Dante; brooding over the fiery sermons of Savonarola; he found Solitude his best companion for mighty thinking. Entertaining few friends, and shunning the society which was the joy of Raphael, his solitary work upon the Sistine Chapel stands out in strange contrast with Raphael at work amongst a crowd of assistants. To his eager soul, Liberty was the flame, his country was his child, his passionate love of justice a stern incentive. Grim and biting of speech he was—and, likely enough, folk flinched from his critical eye. Perugino he bluntly pushed aside as *goffo*, a dunderhead in art. Looking upon a handsome youth, when told that he was the artist Francia's son, he grimly answered, "Your father makes better men by night than by day."

So, Michelangelo, an intensely devoted son of his Church, stepped beyond the limits of the thinking from which that Church now shrank, and boldly accepted ancient philosophy with his faith. His art is the full utterance of what the Renaissance should have been to Italy—but Italy flinched from it. In the great upheaval of the Reformation, the Church entered into a struggle with the North and lost; but she awoke to the more astute policies of the Counter Reformation, and saved the Latin peoples to herself. The schism of the North drove the

Papacy, which had aforetime led thought, into blind enmity to advancing ideals ; and the vast dome of St. Peter's, that is Michelangelo's supreme achievement in architecture, which should have been the home of the union of faith with the leaders of the new culture, welcoming progress and science that its pontiffs created by their fostering care, lost its wider significance as the shrine of the Christian world, and narrowed its dominion over the hearts of man.

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Yet the pontiffs of the Church might well shrink from the state of affairs into which the new Paganism was leading the old and simple faith. The overwhelming genius of Michelangelo is blamed as having been so vast that it left nothing but hordes of imitators to debauch its significance. To say this is wholly to misunderstand the age. Michelangelo's supreme gifts uttered themselves in an age wherein decay was on every side. Literature was sunk into mere academic pedantries and frivolities, or into the obscenities of such as Aretino. Michelangelo dwarfs such men in the eyes of history ; but once his splendour was removed, there was nothing but the mediocre or vicious ineptitude of the Italy of the age to take its place. In the realm of painting, these mediocre artists naturally essayed to employ Michelangelo's methods ; but like all academic effort, they only exaggerated his faults, and were too puny to understand his significance. Their Michelangelesque efforts, however, are not to be mistaken for the real effort that, throughout Italy, during the next century, was made to develop the range of painting, but has been flung into the middle of the Decadence by the muddled incapacity of the writers to grasp its artistic significance. But of that, later.

Michelangelo compelled the art of Sculpture to its utmost powers along the limits of line, which the Greeks

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had developed, until he made it utter his passionate sensing and profound imagination. He compelled painting, so far as the genius of Central Italy had developed its gamut of utterance—that is to say, in the realm of drawing and line—until he could employ the whole wide gamut of the Central Italian orchestration to give forth his imagery in terms of paint employed in the spirit of sculpture. With such sublime power and august vision did he achieve this sombre splendour, that his majestic art completely exhausted the whole potentialities of the Florentine genius and craftsmanship, and left it nothing more to say. In the very act of his supreme endeavour and accomplishment, Michelangelo revealed the limitations of the Florentine genius, even whilst he proved what a Titan could do within those limitations.

It is for this very reason that all after-endeavour of the succeeding years, all attempt to-day—and the folly is widespread—to go back to the Florentines for the craftsmanship of painting, is bound to failure; for not only has the Italian genius uttered itself once for all in supreme fashion, and therefore made modern rivalry of it absurd, but the artist of to-day can never hope to surpass in an artificial effort what was achieved by the giants in a language that was their natural speech.

And even whilst we stand amazed and in homage before the mighty masterpieces of the Florentine achievement in art, it is ever well to keep in mind that, great as it was, the art of painting has developed and advanced to heights of emotional utterance, of which even Michelangelo never dreamed. What the Italians were digging out of craftsmanship with prodigious labour, is now the possession of any gifted student. And he who looks upon the masterpieces of the great dead, and considers them the

complete and ultimate achievement of art, is wholly incapable of receiving the thrill of artistic impression, and is simply the product of the pedant and the book-learned critic.

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Michelangelo stands out a giant amidst giants—his terrible and sublime art towering above the achievement of his age. He is the mighty tragedian, the great dramatist of Italy. He had the virile brain and strong right hand to save his people, but they could not and would not understand him. Just as the frivolous spirit of the people was content with sacerdotalism as their religion, and found Raphael's pleasing and genial art "divine," and stood aside in homage when the young gallant, arrayed like a prince and with a princely retinue, passed in the streets of Rome; so they looked askance at the grim and deep-soul'd man who went by in lonely moodiness, his eyes troubled with the loss of real liberty under the trappings of splendour. So bookish men find "beauty" in Raphael's prettier art, and miss the awful significance of Michelangelo's far mightier essence.

It is easy to understand how Michelangelo, when the *Laocoon* was discovered in 1506, greeted it as "a miracle of art." Here was a work of art that fitted his own Italy. He employed the nude human figure as the supreme design of God's hand; and it was significant of the real state of Italy that the censure of an indecent and trivial poet should have led to the "purification" of Michelangelo's art by the "Maker of Breeches." The human form was his delight—"Nor hath God deigned to show Himself elsewhere more clearly than in human forms sublime, which, since they image Him, alone I love." He bent his strong will to master its every detail, dissecting the dead, though "it turned

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his stomach so that he could neither eat nor drink with benefit." The human form he employed for every decoration—indeed, it was the whole symbol through which he uttered the emotions; whether he felt the profound tragedy of life, its sublime essence, its majestic possibilities, the vast significance and terrible mystery of it all, it was in terms of the human body that he uttered these things.

His eye and hand were so creative, his skill so certain, his calculation so sure, that he saw at once what a block of marble would yield to his wondrous chisel; as though the masterpiece lay entombed therein but awaiting its release at his hands, he set to work upon the rough-hewn block with forthright will that never hesitated; the splinters flew under his reckless skill, as he cut down to the figure that came to life under his astounding wizardry. There is witness that in his old age he would cut away more waste marble from the block in a quarter of an hour than three younger men in a couple of hours; and, as he sang, "when my rude hammer to the stubborn stone gives human shape," his daring chisel would so closely follow the forms of the figure that rapidly came into being, that the slightest error would have wrecked the whole. It need only be remembered that the great *David* was hewn straight from the marble without any model of clay whatsoever. So with his painting. We know that he entered upon his work in the Sistine Chapel on the 10th of the May of 1508—and had finished the ceiling on the 1st of November 1509—but even this colossal achievement of a large number of figures, many ten feet high, was done within these eighteen months, for it is said that he dismissed all pupils, destroyed the work, and started alone on the January of that year—if so, creating this vast work in ten months. Fresco can only be worked upon whilst wet, so that every

day's painting reveals itself—Sir Charles Holroyd, on making careful examination of the sublime figure of Adam in the *Creation*, found that it was painted in three days' work.

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His body's strength must have been prodigious. So cramped was his powerful frame by painting the vast ceiling above his face in the Sistine Chapel, that, for some time afterwards, he had to place a book or manuscript above his head to read it. "I 've grown a goitre by dwelling in this den"—his sonnet runs: ". . . My beard turns up to heaven; my nape falls in, fixed on my spine. . . . A rich broidery bedews my face from brush-dips thick and thin; my loins into my paunch like levers grind. . . . False and quaint, I know, must be the fruit of squinting brain and eye; for, ill can aim the gun that bends awry. . . . Foul I fare, and painting is my shame."

Michelangelo was a supreme draughtsman. He produced out of sheer line an intensity of feeling that is akin to the deep resonance of a mighty organ. His whole art was founded on form—on line. Well might he write on the drawing of his pupil Antonio Mini: "Draw, Antonio; draw, Antonio; draw, and waste no time"; his urging to his pupils, like Donatello's, was ever, "I give you the whole art of sculpture when I tell you—*draw!*"

Tragic and forceful; stating his senses with a sublime intensity, largeness of conception, grandeur of form, and a noble and dignified breadth of style; concerning himself with majestic types rather than with character, he was a true son of Italy. He was a Greek in the love of liberty, in the love of the nude whereby to utter his art; he was Italian in his instincts, his vision, and his soul. His art was as a gulf apart from the art of Greece—a gulf of Hebraic and Christian feeling, but above all Hebraic.

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Whilst the Borgias were turning the Vatican into a den of thieves and home of harlots, Michelangelo, resenting the inevitable doom and destruction that awaits all wicked things, urged a noble and strenuous life that should meet the inevitable with fearless courage, careless of the consequences. To everything to which he put his hand he brought the fire of genius, and achieved it with rare distinction! He pleaded ever that he was only a sculptor—he created in painting sublime masterpieces. He demurred to being appointed an architect—he achieved the great cupola-crowned temple of Christendom, and in the doing stands a giant above all the architects of his age.

Steeped in the tradition of the Hebrew writers, holding communion with the thought of Dante, of Plato, and of the Christ—and, like them, a lonely figure and an alien amongst his own people—"To me they portioned darkness for a dower; dark hath my lot been since I was a man"—Michelangelo brooded on the doom of his fellow-men, taken up with foolish things. This homage to Dante is seen in the fact that when, in 1518, the Florentines petitioned Leo x. to transport the bones of Dante from Ravenna to Florence, the artist offered to raise a statue worthy of the poet. How deeply he was influenced by the poet his *Last Judgment* proves. He stood dismayed at the corruption about him everywhere. In the capital of Christendom he saw holy things sold for money to be employed for Julius II.'s wars. "Here helms and swords are made of chalices; the blood of Christ is sold so much the quart: . . . and short must be the time ere even His patience cease." Alone, a gloomy soul apart, in an age given up to sensuality and vice, and hypocrisy, and sham, Michelangelo saw in the human form the divine that lay bound and imprisoned therein.

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Savonarola struggled and died in order that he might stay the demoralisation of society by the pagan invasion; he strove with all his strength to prevent the enslaving of the liberties of the people by her astute and crafty burgess-tyrants. He died and failed. For these aims also Michelangelo lived and wrought and died—and failed. The Medici conquered.

Savonarola, Dante, and Michelangelo all saw the dangers inherent in the fickleness of their race—all saw the dangers inherent in the paganism of the New Culture —but they were all men of gloomy soul, who saw life like the Hebrews of old, not in the spirit of the Gospels. For them the tragic Puritanism that sees the Day of Judgment like a mighty threat hang over all human endeavour—for them the ascetic denials—for them the law Thou Shalt Not. The vast charity of the Christ, the deep pity, the blithe humanity had little significance.

But the awakening life that pulsed throughout the world was young and eager for experience. Italy was corrupt on the one hand, ascetic and gloomy on the other. Of his age, Michelangelo was the mightiest. And it must ever be remembered that much of what he painted was forced upon him. What he desired to do, when he did it, reveals a loftier and more creative sense of the fulfilling of life. He fills his august figures with the sense of mastery—they stand out as gods amongst men. Critics and writers are wont to urge that the great painters of the Renaissance wrought their art in an age wholly sympathetic to that art. We know that it was not so. What did the courtiers and ladies of the Borgias about the Papal Court understand, or care for, in the superb *Pietà* of Michelangelo's genius? In intellect he was a good son of the Church; in the sensing that creates art he was wholly

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unchristian. Pity and humility, gentleness and hope, are wholly alien to him. It is when his genius ranges untrammelled that his utter contempt for his age is revealed, and he sounds as with a mighty trumpet the power and will of man, his destiny to conquer the earth, the forthright forcefulness and energy that are his.

The Fairy Prince of the New Thought had tripped into Italy and kissed the Sleeping Beauty; and she, arising, breathing the fragrant air of Liberty, finding the garden of Italy too close and tropical, departed with him into the West, where Freedom was blossoming over the land, and mediævalism crumbling away before the forthright will of men inspired by the discovery of a new world to wider conquest of life, and urged by a new inquisitiveness to achieve a fuller experience.

Of Michelangelo's direct pupils and assistants were MARCELLO VENUSTI (died 1579), SEBASTIAN DEL PIOMBO, and Daniele Ricciarelli known as DANIELE DA VOLTERRA (1509-1566).

CHAPTER XXIV

WHEREIN THE RENAISSANCE IN ITALY PERISHES AMIDST THE RUINS

ANDREA DEL SARTO
1486 – 1531

WHEREIN THE RENAISSANCE IN ITALY PERISHES AMIDST THE RUINS

We have seen that in Piero di Cosimo's studio was a youth called Andrea d'Agnalo, who was to become famous as Andrea del Sarto—he being the son of a tailor (*sarto*) of Florence. Pupil of Piero di Cosimo he became, but caught little of his master's manner. He looked upon the art of Fra Bartolommeo, and it remained with him. He also, alas! listened too much to the pæans of praise poured out upon Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo—indeed, these giants might well have been sent to overthrow Italian art by the very majesty of their greatness.

Andrea del Sarto had studied Michelangelo's cartoon of the *Battle of Pisa*; and through it, and through Michelangelo's master work, was revealed to him that sculptor-feeling for, and sculptor-treatment of, the human figure, and its arrangement in his design. The brilliant young fellow won early to repute by his facile touch, breadth of handling, and capacity for stating the depth of atmosphere surrounding the figure, for his mellow colouring, and his command of greys. He brought into the achievement of Florence a new revelation—essentially of the fifteen-hundreds—that marked advance in the skill of painting towards a fuller expression of the impression upon the vision.

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There has been for several generations a vogue to speak with contempt of the art of this true painter. He was wont to be called by the fatuous name of "the faultless painter," and his faultlessness is now dubbed the "perfection" of superficiality. He who can see but superficiality in Andrea del Sarto's superb *Portrait of a Sculptor* at the National Gallery in London, rather than one of the supreme portraits of the whole Italian Renaissance, must be strangely lacking in the faculty to sense Art. This superb *Portrait of a Sculptor*, long held to be a portrait of himself, shows not only his mastery of brushing and his command of statement in giving the light and shade on flesh seen through its varying depths of atmosphere, but his supreme power of seizing the melody that is in greys. Another famous masterpiece is the *Portrait of a Lady*, who seems to have been his wife, with a volume of Petrarch in her hands. His superb portraits of himself, which have been neatly described as one of the greatest of autobiographies in the world, hold the grim and tragic tale of the mighty promise of his career, wrecked by the girl Lucretia del Fede, the extravagant and black-hearted jade, who roused a mad infatuation in him which was as disastrous to him as artist as his marriage with her was to him as man. Her face appears in his several Madonnas, in *The Holy Family* at the Borghese Gallery in Rome, in the *Madonna delle Arpie* at the Uffizi in Florence—a long, handsome face, that drew him to dishonours manifold, to villainies, and to self-contempt. For her vile soul he flung his talents into the mere making of money. Her heartless extravagances and vile conceit kept him in a state of perpetual money-troubles. At last he flung up his handsome and lucrative employment by Francis I., King of France, whose confidence and trust he foully betrayed, filching the large sums of gold

XXVI

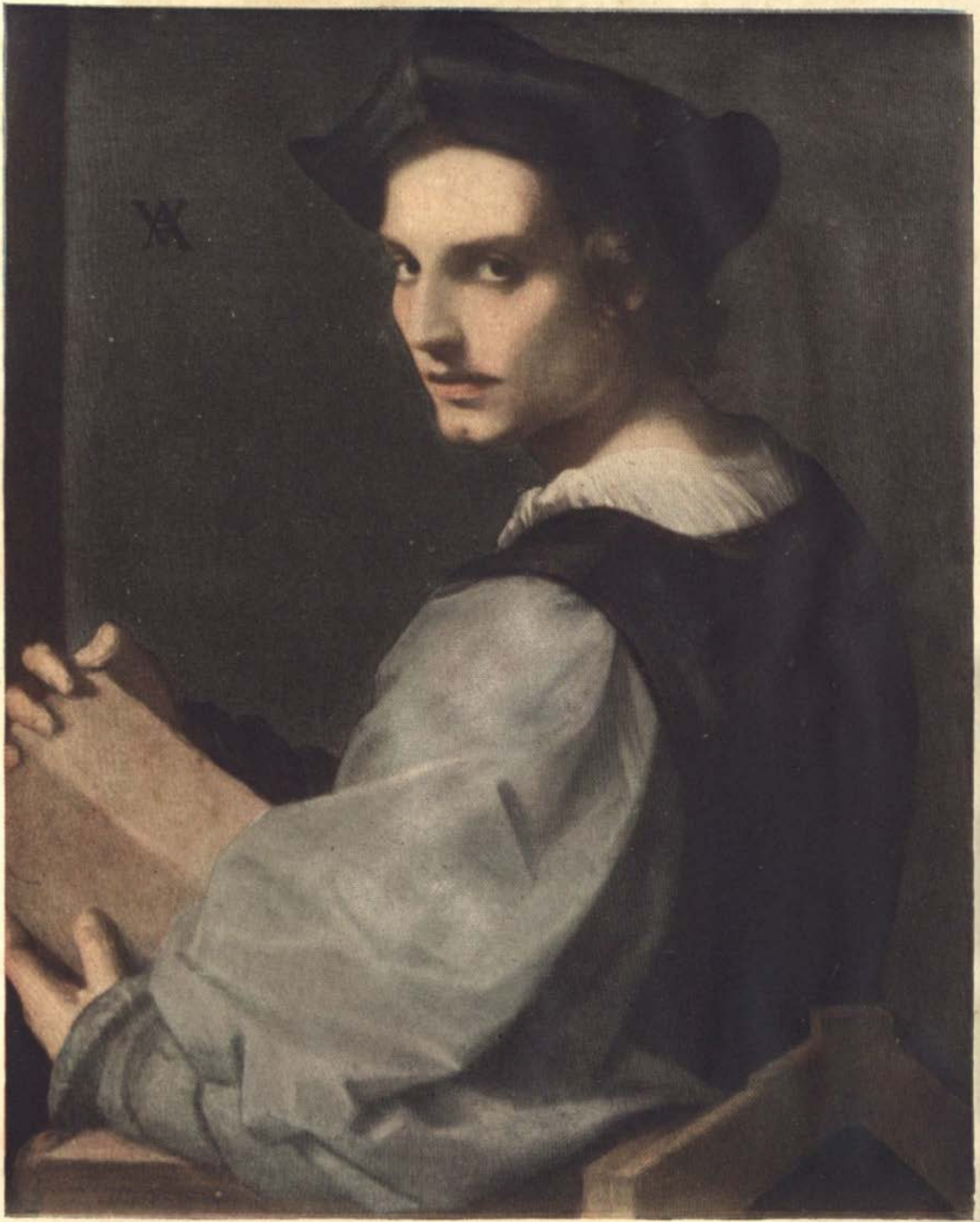
ANDREA DEL SARTO

1486 – 1531

"THE SCULPTOR"

(National Gallery)

This, one of the most haunting portraits of the whole Italian achievement, was long supposed to be the portrait of Andrea Del Sarto himself. It displays the master's art in its most perfect form.



entrusted to him by the king for the purchase of works of art.

WHEREIN THE RENAISSANCE IN ITALY PERISHES AMIDST THE RUINS

The genius of Andrea del Sarto must be judged by his portraits; and so judged he stands amongst the great painters. But he can also take high place with his larger work. He was harassed by the neighbourhood of the vast genius of Michelangelo; in dreading comparison by the side of the other, he allowed his eyes to see, and his hand to create, the academic thing;—instead of being content to be great and express himself, he compelled his hand to employ the brush, and his eyes to see through the vision first of Leonardo da Vinci and then of Michelangelo—and the habit of aping the grand manner grew upon him. Michelangelo's manner of drawing draperies compelled him to follow; and his efforts to rival their sculpturesque sense led him to the statuesque posings which slowly overwhelmed the significance of his own vigorous hand and the reality of things as discovered to his own subtle seeing. So he lost his gaiety and joy in life, and gave his strength to painting poses and draperies. The spiritual and significant things departed from his studio, and pose and draperies became the tricks of a mere clever painter. But the inborn vigour and strength of vision would not let him sink wholly into the academic habit. Even when the burden of Michelangelo was heaviest upon him, he roused himself at times and painted a figure with astounding power. His *Last Supper* is a masterpiece.

When Andrea del Sarto paints at his best, as in his portraits, he stands in achievement beside Giorgione and Titian, reaching, indeed, in some strange fashion, as near as the Florentine temperament and tradition allowed him, into a silvery-keyed rivalry with their vision and utterance. Of this searching sense of colour and forms he gave also

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abundant proof in his *Dispute concerning the Trinity*. Amongst his greatest works are the *frescoes in the Church of SS. Annunziata*, gay, blithe, filled with the joy of life, in which, however, his frank vision gives way as he paints each new fresco to the aim of grandeur that is forcing itself into the fashion, until in the other famous *frescoes of the Life of St. John the Baptist* in the Chiostro dello Scalzo at Florence, he is torn this way and that between his innate and superb gift of painting the figure in its depth of atmosphere, and the overwhelming of this high artistry by the new grand manner in empty draperies.

But Andrea del Sarto's silver-grey harmonies, his translucent liquid blendings of lustrous cool colours, these are purely himself; nowhere else in Italy shall you find the like, and he wrought them with exquisite skill of craftsmanship. These and his large sense of the resonance of light and shade created in the subtle play of the atmosphere upon the object which it surrounds, will make his work live—and one day bring him back his bays. His lack of deep emotion, his absence of inspiration, these will ever hold him back from the seats of the mightiest; but at least he can stand on the steps to the throne. He never fell to the triviality of prettiness; his taste is balanced, he condescends to no mere tricks of thumb—yet his very skill of hand must have sorely tempted him—his hand hesitates or errs never; his craftsmanship is solid. Strong, tranquil, serene, his thoroughness was not shaken even when he heard Lucretia's lover whistle for her at the twilight's ending of the day, saw her restless eagerness to be rid of posing for the Madonna.

At the studio of Piero di Cosimo was a lad from Milan, one FRANCIABIGIO (1482-1525), who became not only the

fellow-student but the faithful friend of Andrea del Sarto, who greatly influenced his art. He is remembered as a portrait-painter and for his frescoes, of which frescoes are two in the Chiostro dello Scalzo that display the strong influence of Andrea del Sarto. It is interesting to note that Vasari's judgment proclaimed Franciabigio as his favourite painter in fresco. Franciabigio, or FRANCIA BIGIO or BIGI, painted many of the portraits long given to Andrea del Sarto and to Raphael.

WHEREIN THE RENAISSANCE IN ITALY PERISHES AMIDST THE RUINS

Amongst Andrea del Sarto's direct pupils were Pontormo and Rosso Rossi, or ROSSI DE' SALVIATI or ROSSO FIORENTINO (1494-1541), strongly affected by Michelangelo and by Pontormo. This Rosso was a friend of Vasari's. He spent the greater part of his life, and died, in France at the Court of the French king, where he was known as *Maître Roux*.

PONTORMO

1494 – 1556

Jacopo Carucci, more widely known as JACOPO DA PONTORMO, was born at Pontormo, or Puntormo, in the May of 1494, the son of a painter Bartolommeo Carucci. The lad lost his father at five and his mother at ten, and was placed, if we are to go by Vasari's gossip, under Leonardo da Vinci, then under Albertinelli, then under Piero di Cosimo, from whom he passed to the care of Andrea del Sarto in 1512, in his eighteenth year.

Pontormo was a man of genius, who wrought portraits and wall-paintings which prove him possessed of qualities which might have lifted him to very high achievement; but who fell under the spell, and thence to imitation, of Michelangelo, to end as an academic who saw high art in vast nudes. As a portrait-painter, however, he came to

greatness, as is shown in his famous panel of *Cosimo dei Medici* at San Marco, and his *Lady with a Dog* at Frankfurt.

When Pontormo thrust the vision of his masters from him and uttered his own impressions, he painted upon the wall the blithe, fresh fancy of the fresco of *Vertumnus, Pomona, and Diana*, a lunette painted round a window at the Royal Villa near Florence, Poggio a Caiano, with a sense of colour and design that set him amongst the foremost artists of his day. Such achievements, and his great portraiture, blot out the riots of fantastic nudes in the Michelangelesque imitation which led him along the road to meaningless falsities. The ambitious design, on which he spent eleven years of his life, in his Michelangelesque style, the huge frescoes in the church of San Lorenzo at Florence, of *The Deluge* and *The Last Judgment*, have long been covered with whitewash. Happily, his powerful portraits did not tempt him to sink his own individuality, and their rich colour and lively air are his best hostages to fame. He died in Florence at the end of 1556, being buried in the church of the Annunziata there, on the 2nd of January 1557, his fresco of the *Visitation* in the court of the Annunziata standing as his fine epitaph.

In Pontormo's studio was trained a pupil, afterwards to come to fame as Bronzino, who assisted him in many of his works, and finished Pontormo's huge frescoes in the church of San Lorenzo, before the whitewash swallowed them.

BRONZINO

1502 – 1572

ANGELO ALLORI, called BRONZINO, was born near Florence, at Monticelli, in 1502, and, as has been seen, became pupil to Pontormo, and assistant and completer of his unfinished designs. Bronzino is also sometimes confusingly called

ANGIOLO DI COSIMO. Born when Michelangelo was twenty-seven, and at the height of his powers; growing to manhood when Michelangelo's compelling genius and gigantic achievement wholly overwhelmed the art of Florence and Rome, Bronzino died some eight years after the giant of the Renaissance was laid in his grave. He lived, therefore, in the supreme years of the Florentine achievement; and his dying eyes beheld the complete collapse of that achievement. In Venice, beyond the mountains, the Venetian achievement was at its highest pitch of splendour, Titian being but a youth when Bronzino first saw the light.

WHEREIN THE RENAISSANCE IN ITALY PERISHES AMIDST THE RUINS

Bronzino was, like Rosso or Rossi de' Salviati, a close friend of Vasari, the interesting writer of art gossip and biography of the Italian Renaissance.

It is the present fashion to decry the art of Bronzino; and perhaps the exaggerated estimate of his day has been answerable for the injustice. In Bronzino was born to the later years of the Renaissance of Italy a portrait-painter of marked power, and one who was to have a prodigious influence throughout Europe in the years to come. So markedly influenced by his master, Pontormo, that it would be difficult to say where the master's hand finishes and the assistant takes up the brush in the work they wrought together; and so closely akin in their qualities that the experts are hard put to it to-day sometimes to decide whether master or pupil painted certain portraits.

Bronzino was poet as well as painter, running much to burlesques, not devoid of naughtiness; and the poems of his pen reveal a questionable laxity in affairs of sex not wholly absent from his painted allegories. But when John Addington Symonds, an astoundingly clear-sighted critic of the art of the Renaissance when we consider the attitude towards art in the eighteen-seventies, condemns

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Bronzino's fine "Allegory" of *Venus and Cupid with Time and Folly*, at the National Gallery in London, as "detestable," one suspects his "propriety," and questions his taste. It was the Victorian censor of all the moralities burning in a strange vessel. Nor is it easy to discover therein the "defects of Raphael's and Michelangelo's imitators," for it recalls neither the one nor the other; Bronzino had been looking upon a far different master of the allegory, called Botticelli. And the last charge that can be laid against it is that it shows either "want of thought" or of "feeling," or is "combined with the presumptuous treatment of colossal and imaginative subjects," nor that this combination "renders it inexpressibly chilling." He who finds this somewhat hot work of art to be "chilling" must lack the sense of temperature. Bronzino understood the French King, for whom he painted it—Francis the First—better than the critics have understood the significance of art. Indeed, whether the lack of "chill" in this design be an affair of bad art or good art, according to Symonds is of little account. In it is much good art, whatever the morals, for we see therein the real significance of the artist uttering with truth the emotion that was in him—*it is* a fine achievement. It is, besides, significant of his age. Bronzino, essaying the religious picture—as in his large and dull "Limbo" or *Descent of Christ into Hell*—is seen affecting the religiosities without conviction—employing a subject which has small place in his senses, in order to create a turmoil of the nudes with what he took to be the grand manner of Michelangelo—painting the nude for the sake of showing off his academic capacity for painting the naked, wholly without spiritual significance, lacking largeness of design, poverty-stricken in the colour-sense. It was exactly in his pagan allegories that he came nearest

XXVII

SCHOOL OF
BRONZINO
1502 – 1572

FLORENTINE SCHOOL

"PORTRAIT OF A BOY"

(NATIONAL GALLERY)

This portrait of a noble fledgling gives no full idea of the superb achievement of Bronzino in portraiture. His Venus-piece in the same gallery is one of the most valuable treasures in this great collection.

Painted on wood. 4 ft. 2½ in. h. × 2 ft. w. (1·282 × 0·609).

to striking fire from the rigid, cold, hard anvil of his art. It is interesting to note how a certain quaint trick of placing the legs in a sideways slant of somewhat charming awkwardness prevailed with him—it is seen in this allegory of *Venus and Cupid* that shocked Symonds; it recurs in his fine *St. John the Baptist* at the Borghese Gallery in Rome, where again there is no spiritual atmosphere but considerable power; it is seen at its worst in the *Dead Christ* at the Uffizi, though he realises an astounding sense of the limpness of the dead thereby; and it is even employed with considerable grace in the *Venus and Cupid* at Buda-Pesth. Indeed, *Venus and Cupid* ever brought out the best qualities of his art—struck fire from the steel that his cold colouring was otherwise liable to suggest—as the picture at the Colonna Palace in Rome again proves. In all is a frank delight in lusty passion that runs to naughtiness. In *The Holy Family* at the Pitti in Florence is considerable charm, if little religious atmosphere; but the religious picture as a rule brought out all Bronzino's worst defects; and in *The Virgin* at the Uffizi he uses his favourite awkwardness of the leg to a degree that is vile bad drawing, and causes discomfort through the vision to the senses, as though a bully twisted one's arms.

WHEREIN THE RENAISSANCE IN ITALY PERISHES AMIDST THE RUINS

But the moment Bronzino stands before a portrait, he braces himself to remarkable achievement. The *Portrait of a Boy* at the National Gallery in London is not his, though the most widely known of his accounted works, and by no means to be compared with his finest portraiture—indeed, we here have the critics attributing it now to Pontormo, now to Rosso Fiorentino (Salviati), and then to others—probably because it is richer in colour than Bronzino's usual painting. Bronzino left us an astoundingly fine gallery of the personages of the Florentine Court of his day, being for-

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tunately employed to that end by the Grand Duke Cosimo I. —most of these are to be seen in Florence. Not only are his portraits searching works of art, and marked by rare distinction; not only do they display keen sense of character and insight into personality, though the painting be hard enough at times, and the colour somewhat chill; but they had a wide-reaching effect in setting the style and manner of portrait-painting throughout almost every Court in Europe; and it is impossible to avoid the conviction that Velasquez, directly or indirectly, owed a heavy debt to them. Velasquez was so original and virile a realist, that whatever convention he employed must have been a very overwhelming one in his day; and to the influence of Bronzino much of that convention guides. Even Mr. Berenson, a most astute observer of the comparative relations of the artistry of painters, seems to have been struck by this; and it is impossible to look upon the portraits by Bronzino of *Eleanora da Toledo*, of *Prince Ferdinand*, and of the girlish *Princess Maria de' Medici* at the Uffizi in Florence, without thinking of the great Spaniard.

Of Bronzino's famous renderings of *Cosimo I.*, himself, in armour, his hand upon his helmet, and of the head of *Cosimo I.* alone, the Uffizi, the Pitti, the Royal Gallery in Berlin, hold superb examples; besides the *Duke Cosimo I. with the Sprig of Myrtle*, Berlin possesses also a good *Eleanor of Toledo*, as does the Uffizi this same *Eleanor of Toledo and her child, Don Garcia*. The little Medici *Garcia*, Bronzino painted several times, from the fat, laughing little fellow holding the goldfinch, to bigger boyhood. The Uffizi contains also the superb portrait of little *Mary de' Medici* as a little girl, and another of the head of the same *Mary de' Medici* as a girl, as well as the *Mary de' Medici* head and bust with hand on breast. There also are the

Lucretia Panciatichi—the head and bust of *A Young Lady*, her hand holding a book—the *Man in Armour*; whilst at the Borghese is the half-nude bust of *Lucretia* with dagger held upwards in her slender fingers, which Morelli vows to the art of Bronzino.

WHEREIN THE RENAISSANCE IN ITALY PERISHES AMIDST THE RUINS

Dying in Florence on the 23rd of the November of 1572, on the edge of seventy, as the fifteen-hundreds reached their twilight, the last mighty spirit of the Florentine Renaissance, the great heart and vigorous body of Michelangelo eight years in the grave, Bronzino was the last master of significance in the art of Florence. With him the Renaissance wholly ends in Tuscany and the south. In Venice, across the mountains to the north, the Renaissance still brought forth splendour; the Renaissance came to later birth in Venice, but was even now also well-nigh spent. Titian was near his ending, with but five years to live; Paolo Veronese died sixteen years later; Tintoretto was not to see the fifteen-hundreds out, dying twenty years after.

The fifteen-hundreds were the Golden Age of the Renaissance in Italy; the first fifty years of the century saw the Renaissance in Tuscany at its full flowering—the last half saw it wholly wither and die. When 1600 struck, the Renaissance throughout Italy was at an end; and a far vaster and mighter art was about to be born.

Italy, making one final and colossal effort through the sublime personality of Michelangelo, essayed to utter the full significance of the New Thought; but Michelangelo, for all his almost superhuman powers, balked and flung back by the utter corruption throughout the land, baffled most of all by the utter corruption of Rome, as you shall read in the despair of his sonnets, like his own Italy,

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unable wholly to rid himself and his soul from the shackles and dead weight of a great historic past, reeled back even as he created the mightiest artistic achievements of his age, cursing Beauty, which he found, for all its sublime splendour, to be but Dead Sea Apples in his mouth, whilst the deeper man in him craved for mightier adventures of the soul.

To the Italians of the After-Renaissance we will return again; but before betaking us over the Apennines to our Venetian journey, let us estimate the endeavour of the genius of Tuscany and the peoples lying adjacent thereto, to utter the revelation of their age through their senses.

It will be seen that the Florentine genius broke into two streams, the one largely tributary to Siena, that concerned itself with a suave beauty rooted in mysticism—through Fra Angelico, Filippo Lippi, Botticelli, Ghirlandaio, and Filippino Lippi, culminating in Raphael; the other concerned with tragic power, deep rooted in realism and the human form—through Donatello, Masaccio, the Pollaiuoli, Verrocchio, and Leonardo da Vinci, culminating in Michelangelo. And he who puts aside the worn-out theories, rigid classifications, and labels of the professors and museum-masters, which have no relation whatever to art, and are but a rough and ready way of dealing with schools, and who instead gazes at the Florentine achievement throughout the Renaissance, allowing his whole senses to surrender themselves to the impression created upon him by the works of that achievement, will notice simply this: The early endeavour of the men of the Renaissance, wearied of mere illumination, was to paint on flat surfaces the visions aroused in their senses by the new life that was surging through their world—the first effort is always to draw in outline and to fill in this outline with

flat colours; then the painter bends his will to try and overcome mere flatness of *height and width* by so painting objects that they express *depth*, or, to put it perhaps more simply, to paint things as they would appear in a mirror. To this seeming simple problem the whole effort of the Renaissance craftsmanship bent its will—first by essaying to paint objects as they saw that low reliefs in sculpture uttered them, by winning to mastery of light and shade. And Michelangelo, for all his gigantic strength and vigorous will, was able to thrust the craft of painting no farther than this intention, which Leonardo da Vinci had already conquered. With their craftsmanship of painting developed to this advance, however, the vast genius of Florence employed it to astounding purpose, compelling it to express a mighty gamut of human emotion that reaches from the most exquisite and subtle shades of mystery to the stupendous and awful heights that create the sense of the sublime.

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But with colour as colour—with the employment of colour to do what the Florentines compelled light and shade to do, the whole genius of Tuscany achieved but little. Florence employed colour with exquisite sense of its rhythm; but of its vast values in uttering the orchestration of the musical thrill that colour arouses in the senses, of the relations of colour to colour bathed in the depth of the atmosphere that surrounds each object before the vision, they knew scarce aught at all. They were feeling dumbly for it, but could get no nearer than to state the light and shade of things with intense and exquisite inquisitiveness, and to play colour thereabout.

One of the sadnesses of the fact of life is the shortness of its duration; but an even more pathetic fact is the short

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duration of the greatness of a people. The Italian peoples roused like a young giant to inhale the breath of the New Thought. With eager desire they leaped forward to grasp it. It took but three hundred years completely to exhaust them. The full significance they would not realise. And the New Ambitions of Man, the New Virility, folded its cloak and silently flitted over the northern fastnesses of the Alps, and departed to other peoples. Italy reeled back, a slave under the heels of servile polities; her literary endeavour a mere feeble and academic scholarship; her art grown into mere futile imitations of her former greatness.

THE END OF VOLUME I.

Printed by T. and A. Constable, Printers to His Majesty
at the Edinburgh University Press

00063791

Digitized with financial assistance from
Observer Research Foundation
on 17 May, 2019